

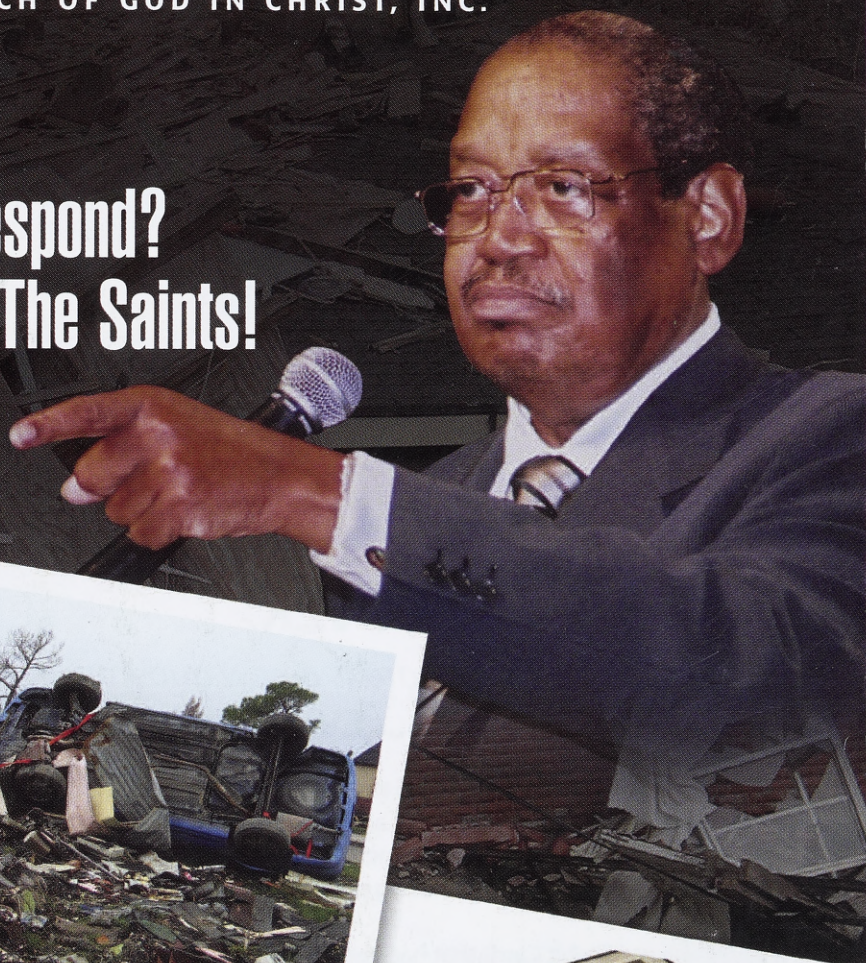
JANUARY/FEBRUARY/MARCH 2006

The Whole Truth

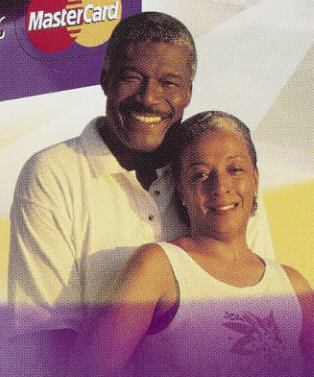
THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST, INC.



**Bringing Hope And Restoration.
Will The Church Continue To Respond?
Our Leader Is Depending Upon The Saints!**



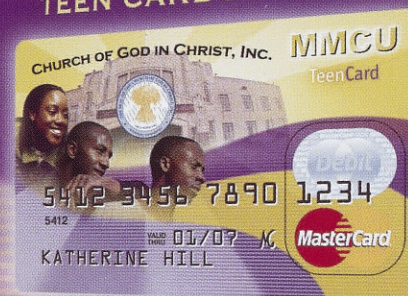
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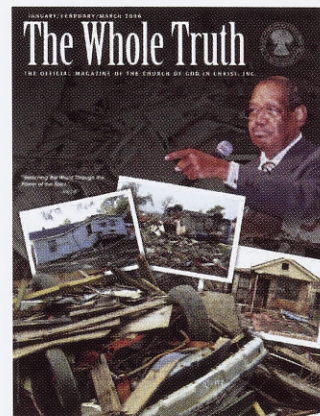

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Editorial

I have another opportunity to offer God's people a message in editorial form. This is a season where everyone should know there is no disconnect between the General Church and our Gulf Coast Region Saints who have suffered substantial physical, emotional and spiritual pain during and after the hurricane season of 2005.

The Whole Truth magazine is the official organ of the Church Of God In Christ. In its pages you will find the announcements, activities and articles that reflect the ministries and accomplishments of the Saints. America's hurricane season has propelled praying persons into action. The gospel message we preach is timeless and offers both a supernatural and practical application for the challenges of recent times. The initial activities and responses the Church made to help its members and others live beyond the tragedy of two massive hurricanes was magnanimous! Yet, I implore you there is more to do!



Presiding Bishop G.E. Patterson has been liberal beyond measure and inspired the outpouring of compassionate giving across the length and breadth of the Church. We all followed his lead and did wonderfully, and in comparison did as well as any other major religious organization. This edition of The Whole Truth magazine is dedicated to those who did something tangible. Thank God the coverage is not comprehensive, but does demonstrate to the world that the Church Of God In Christ is a charitable and compassionate institution. The question yet remains, what shall we do to continue meeting the needs of hurricane evacuees? **Is our leader and the General Board out there alone or can they depend upon this organization to stand with its support and money where there is so great a need?**

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita delivered heavy blows across the Gulf Coast Region. The destruction and following events were unprecedented in the history of America. There are 90,000 squares miles of tangible destruction across Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana; hundreds and thousands of people have been displaced. An estimated 220,000 homes were destroyed. Many of our saints lost their homes, churches, autos and communities. I am proud to say that the Saints were excellent as first responders and helped carry the initial burdens of meeting physical and financial needs of hurricane evacuees. The love of God was greatly shone and appreciated by those in harms way. I can say emphatically, COGIC Charities has aggressively responded and is providing what its resources will allow.

The General Board of Bishops has commissioned a Blue Ribbon Committee to examine and consider the best way for our organization to help in the necessary restoration of people to their indigenous areas. Presiding Bishop Patterson and the board are considering ways to support the reestablishment of congregations and rebuilding of sanctuaries. The Church's funds, resources and abilities are not limitless, but what our leaders endeavor to plan and provide will be worthy assistance. From September thru October, the Saints have mobilized and will no doubt need to do more of the sacrificial giving. During the April Call Meeting, we anticipate receiving complete credential reports. The April Meeting will be another opportunity to be charitable.

Ask yourself, what if my home, church, and community were utterly devastated? What if, my church family were spread across the country and living in the most difficult of circumstances? Would you not expect a helping hand? (You would hope the Saints could continue to activate our Church's philanthropic arm?) For these reasons, I would like to challenge each local congregation to send its pastor, with an additional financial gift for the care and support of COGIC members in need.

As the Apostle Paul did in the New Testament, we too, can do the same. Love in action is definitely about extending a helping hand. Our Chief Apostle has demonstrated a beneficence unparalleled. Can he count on us to make a continued and genuine sacrifice? Don't tell me what he has done, but rather, what we will do now! If our leader should ask hopefully the General Assembly will conduct two lines during the assembly session, one to collect reports and the other to collect cashiers checks for charitable giving.

David Hall, Editor

HERE COMES THE JUDGE

FINDING FREEDOM IN THE PROMISED LAND

G. E. PATTERSON

You Call Yourself A Christian.

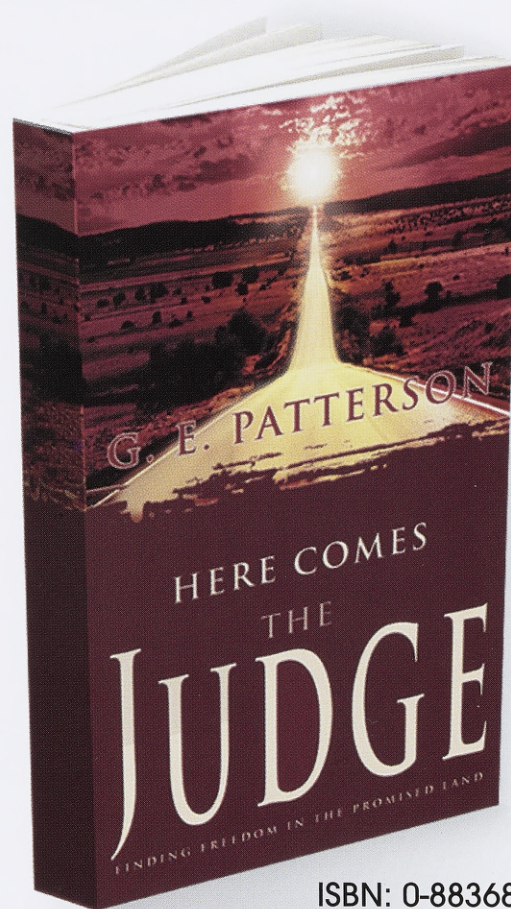
You say that you have surrendered your entire life to God, and you're living in the Promised Land of your salvation.

But it seems that the feeling of fulfillment was temporary-replaced by emptiness. Sickness has crept in where health should be. What about your finances? You thought you would be rich, not just living from day to day. Depression has become a way of life. The feeling of freedom and power has been replaced by bondage and fear.

But God loves His people, and He loves you too much to let you shrivel up in a dungeon of depression or helplessness. In the days of the Old Testament, God sent men and women with the authority to deliver His people from oppression, even when they didn't deserve His mercy. These deliverers were called "judges," because they brought His justice and mercy into balance in the lives of His people. Today, you have the greatest Judge of all-Jesus Christ.

G. P. Patterson challenges you to let Christ break the shackles of low self-esteem, poverty, and spiritual dryness off your life. Open your heart to His righteous judgments, and you will find His offer of forgiveness, grace, and new freedom! With Jesus the Deliverer on your side,

you are the only person who can prevent your freedom.



ISBN: 0-88368-775-5

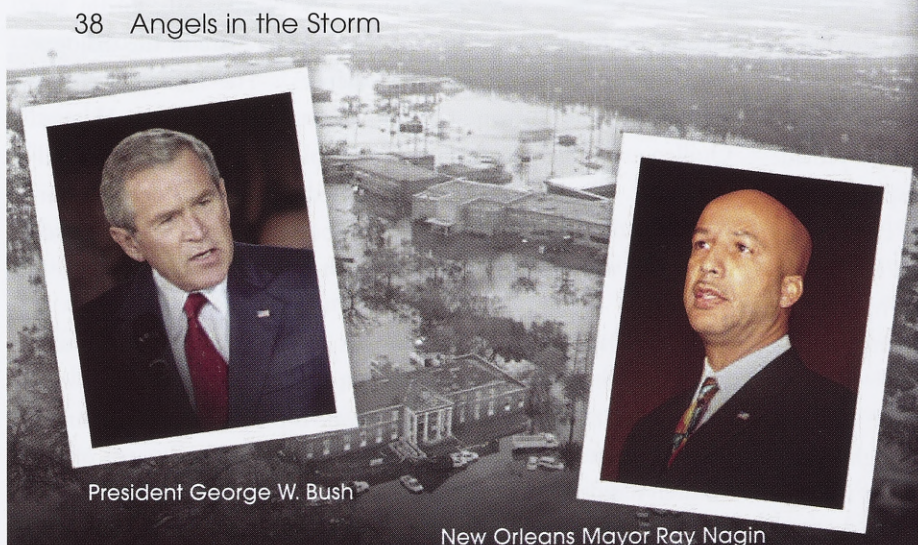
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Available at the COGIC Bookstore
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The Whole Truth

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President George W. Bush

New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin

The Whole Truth magazine (USPS No. 780340) is published quarterly for the annual subscription rate of \$20. Payable in advance in U.S. currency only. Published by the Church Of God In Christ, Inc., 2500 Lamar Avenue Memphis, TN 38114. Periodical Postage rate paid at Memphis, TN. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Whole Truth* Magazine, P.O. Box 2017, Memphis, TN 38101. For additional information or to subscribe, call 901.744.0477 or write: *The Whole Truth* Magazine, P.O. Box 2017, Memphis, TN 38101.



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COGIC OFFERS ASSISTANCE TO HURRICANE KATRINA VICTIMS

Hurricane Relief Committee Meets Survivors

Hurricane Katrina / NOAA Satellite and Information Service



Hurricane Katrina / David Hall



Hurricane Katrina Aftermath / David Hall



Hurricane Katrina / David Hall

By Dr. David A. Hall, Sr.

His Grace, Presiding Bishop Gilbert Earl Patterson established a blue ribbon committee to guide the response of the Church Of God In Christ to the Katrina/Rita Hurricanes and related disasters. Katrina was one of many hurricanes during the 2005 season but Katrina was a category 5 storm, and our nation is yet striving to recover from its after effects. Bishop Roy L.H. Winbush, a general board member and a member of the President Bush-Clinton Emergency Committee, was appointed by our leader to provide analysis and guidance for our Church's emergency response. The Church's initial response was truly a demonstration of compassion and tangible commitment, and Bishop G.E. Patterson has led the way for our initial efforts in behalf of hurricane survivors. The committee's late efforts will be devoted to transition and restoration.

blame is fixed, the people are still suffering. COGIC Charities, several jurisdictions and local churches responded with emergency food, funds, clothing and shelter. General Board Committee members, Bishops J.Neaul Haynes, P.A. Brooks, S.L. Green and George McKinney went to New Orleans to share in the dialogue with Bishop Winbush and the evacuees. The Bishops Lyndale Brown, Charles Brown, George Albert, Earl Gordon, Howard Quillen and Albert Jordan were assembled to share their immediate plight. Their jurisdictions sustained tremendous damage during the storms and many of their personal homes and church properties were severely damage, if not totally destroyed.

Presiding Bishop G.E. Patterson has given Bishop Winbush and committee marching orders to affect the situation our saints currently exist under. All that can be done is primary to this committee's function. COGIC Charities, the philanthropic arm of the Church has donated money and resources over the years of its brief existence. Groups like the Salvation Army, United Way, United Nations Food program, Horn of Africa Relief and the American Heart Association have all benefitted from our compassion. Now, our own people are in harm's way. The saints are ready and willing to extend the support already provided.

On August 29, 2006, Katrina and days later, Rita brought winds and rain of 125-150 mph across the Gulf of Mexico and into the states of Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi. New Orleans was flooded and loss 80% of its housing stock. How vivid are the scenes of people at the Convention Center and the New Orleans Superdome suffering and some even died. The mandatory evacuation of the city's population is yet being debated; while political

Before the evacuees gathered at the New Orleans Airport Hilton, the General Board Committee rode through the disaster area. It was Bishop Winbush's second trip. The devastation was immense! The committee was visibly moved when viewing the destruction. Things which are hard to describe, unbelievable and thought physically impossible occurred with frequency. The hurricane's power was terrible! Comments from the committee ranged from utter shock to prayerful wonder of how people survived! Standing amid the destruction was sobering. The group talked honestly about the best way to positively impact the lives of our saints.

At the meeting, Bishop Winbush explained he is a member of the special Bush- Clinton Committee of nationally known pastors. They are assessing the church buildings destroyed during the hurricanes. There is a 100 million dollar pool of which 20 million is earmarked for reconstruction of churches. Bishop Winbush will seek to provide our pastors with as much of that money as possible. There are many hundreds of individuals who are looking toward that fund for support. The awesome job is not made any easier when the victims gather and tell their stories. As our evacuees shared their needs it became obvious that some requests were unreasonable. Any disbursements made would be well scrutinized by the government (IRS). The committee is committed to fair appropriation, and integrity is essential to the charitable reconstruction process. The key word is "spread" the money around !

While in New Orleans, the committee met to assess the proper response to aid in transition and redevelopment of churches and the communities across the three states. On February 4, 2006, the painful but necessary sharing of the tragic circumstances began. One by one the bishops and pastors shared their stories. It was heart wrenching to feel the anguish and frustrations they had. Besides the suffering, they shared one common testimony, that God had blessed them with life. Their hurt and feelings of isolation were palpable. Many of their congregations are spread across three states and both their homes and church properties lay in near total ruin.

The cruel facts is that property insurance was hard to come by or

was purposely and grossly inadequate. Due to being in a flood plain, most residents of the Lower Ninth Ward were not eligible for good insurance. The insurance companies are vociferously demanding that damages may not be covered. The government proposed the Baker Plan to buy the affected properties for 60% of value, then develop the property for sale. The voices of evacuees were lifted up to challenged the Church to provide immediate funds for daily living. That would takes millions of dollars. Those hundreds and millions of dollars the Church does not have; not even the government has unlimited financial resources. Still, the committee heard and listened with respect and compassion. Bishop Winbush informed the group that monetary payments to individuals are being reviewed by the IRS. "We could provide

money if we had it. Still, the IRS is evaluating how to tax that money, whether as a gift or as income", said Chairman Winbush. Bishop Winbush's remarks made it clear he would rather error on the side caution than to burden the evacuees with additional penalties and tax problems. Bishop Winbush and the board wanted the saints to know the Church has many difficult decisions to make and will appropriate funds fairly and effectively. It seems the limited funds the Church has will be appropriated for a specific need.

Bishop George Albert is bravely leading his newly given jurisdiction through this aftermath. He expressed his hurt as he explained that his personal home and prop-

erty were inundated by water, and his church building left in ruin. His story reflected what person after person shared with the committee. Mississippi's Bishop Albert Jordan informed the committee that three churches on the Gulf Coast were totally destroyed. His jurisdiction is struggling and doing whatever possible to help those in need. Bishop Earl Gordon housed hundreds of evacuees and national guard troops in his facilities. His ministry supplied utilities and a vast amount of food, and he is yet waiting for some reimbursement. Elder Joseph Roberts, Executive Director/CEO of the Regional Community Development Corporation raised the idea that the Church Of God In Christ should think outside the box. The Church could possibly think about a partnership with community development corporations and the government. He is currently working with a couple of other black denominations that are now pressing for the opportunity to develop or redevelop housing,



Pastors David Simmons and Fred Idom, Jr. Filled out damage survey forms



Hurricane Katrina Aftermath / Katherine Pangaro

both inside New Orleans and outside the state. Roberts told The Whole Truth, "80% of our housing stock is gone. The Church Of God In Christ has a great name and it could be used to make us a major player in the redevelopment of the stricken areas." CBS News reported there are 11,000 portable houses located and stored in Arkansas. Federal law forbids the government from installing the units in a floor plane. Furthermore, the Ninth Ward is without infrastructure to accommodate plumbing and electricity. The portable houses represent over 400 million dollars in wasted appropriations.

Each General Board member told the saints of their initial and continued commitment to helping them back to normal existence. Most of them personally gave \$10,000.- \$20,000.00 apiece, opened their churches, properties and other resources for the benefit of the evacuees. The committee asked

each pastor to fill out an assessment form. The forms would be used to help the Church respond to evacuee needs.

The Whole Truth Magazine hopes that reading this article gives the reader a proper sense of what the broken levee and the surge of the storm did to the lives and property of people. 80% of the city of New Orleans laid under 20 feet of water. As the General Board works on the issue and begins a tangible response to the long range issues ahead, the entire Church Of God In Christ will provide the necessary dollars to make certain something tangible is done to reestablish churches in the affected area.



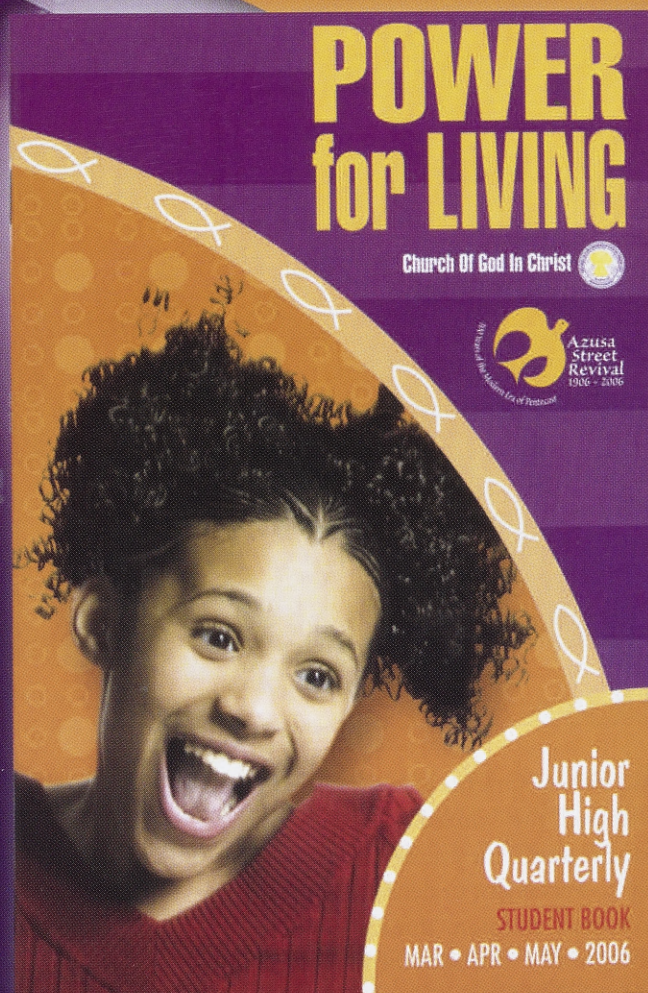
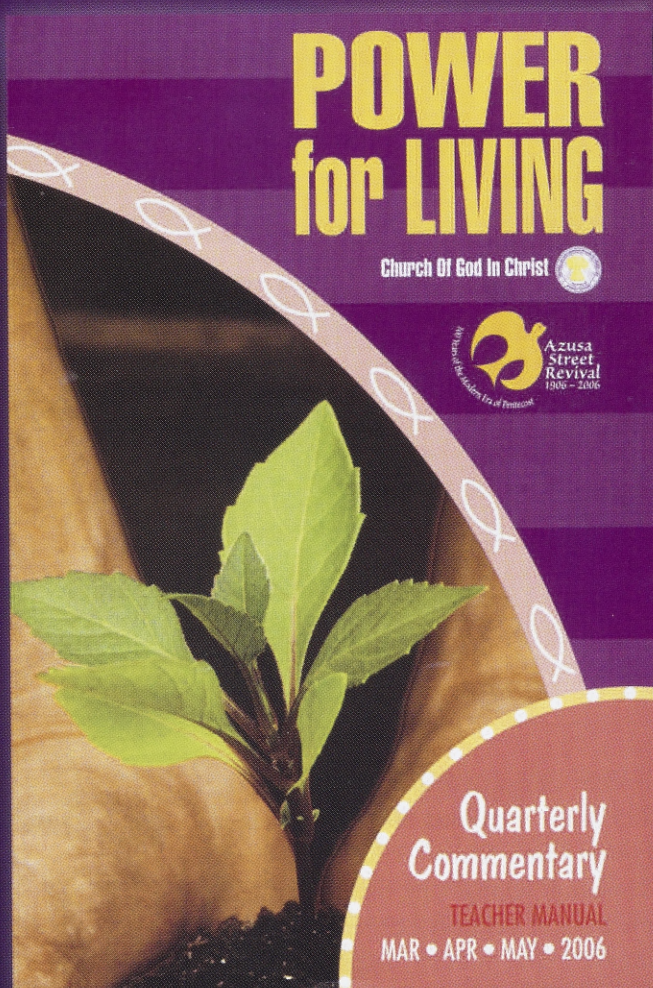
Committee Chairman, Bishop Roy Winbush introduced high level committee members, General Board members Haynes, Brooks, Green, Macklin. Absent was Bishop Jerry Macklin.

web page at www.cogicharities.org. Or, send contributions to COGIC Charities Hurricane Relief Fund. P.O. Box 37, Memphis, Tennessee 38101

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Touched By Suffering

Dave Jones building collapsed during the hurricane. His life's work in ruins

Hurricane Katrina Aftermath / David Hall



By Dr. David A. Hall, Sr.

I was in New Orleans for the General Board Committee meeting. I witnessed the drama and painful reality of the aftermath of hurricane season. The evacuees came to share and testify about their plight. Personally, understanding the depth of their pain proved too remote and non-threatening to have a lasting affect on me; that is, until I witnessed the hurt and bewilderment in their faces. It was in New Orleans that I came to understand the true anguish and despair these people have lived with since August 29, 2005.

Like so many of you, the church I serve responded with money, food, clothes, resources, and demonstrations of love. The news media referred to hurricane survivors as evacuees and labeled them refugees. Because of their skin color and economic status, the hurricane survivors were ignored by the government during the crushing moments of the storm and its aftermath. The terrible pictures on television made America respond from the heart. Giving made me feel good and for a few days, I thought their plight was momentary. How superficial and out of touch I was with their suffering realities!

The Church Of God In Christ responded quickly and without hesitation to the cries and needs of the victims of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Then my travels and work with the Church Of

God In Christ took me directly to the area itself. I traveled the streets of the Lower Ninth Ward. I looked at the desolation wrought by nature and felt the sting of political indifference superimposed over human needs. Each pastor who addressed the General Board brought his story and candidly sharpened our focus. I saw in their faces the dignity, character and hope of their calling, but then, they reminded me of my own calling. What Katrina and Rita did to their homes, communities and churches would be far less damaging than the Church's failure to demonstrate a continued commitment to them. My dignity, character and hope in God was placed on the line, and is yet on the line. What will the Church Of God In Christ do for them? This edition of The Whole Truth will expose the condition of these suffering people. I hope to encourage your continued commitment to the needs of those people in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. Our commitment must be tangible support given to the General Board as they seek to appropriate resources, as well as money to those left vulnerable by the storms of life.

Those willing to help must consider how the psychological, spiritual and social disaster is working upon the evacuees. I sensed it,



especially in the voice of my friend, Bishop Charles Brown. He and the other pastors are capable, strong and intelligent leaders; their records prove them to be men of business acumen and practical knowledge. However, events larger than any we have known have besieged and almost crushed 100 pastors like them. I don't ever want to really know what they feel! Before these pastors are their life's work, their families living in temporary quarters, their members scattered over three or four states, and their economy on hold, if not totally shattered. My heart went out to Superintendent Dave Jones. The venerable old sage has lived to see his life's work fall and crash before his very eyes. In spite of all that, these saints must maintain their outlook of faith and the ability to feed into the lives of their people. They are pastors!

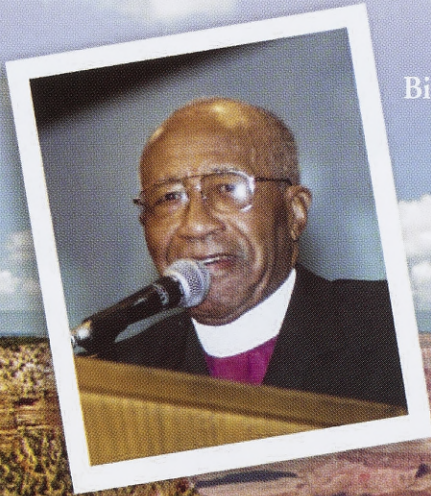
After witnessing the General Board committee at work, I realized that you and I are a life line for the evacuees. We are the miracle and the source of the evacuees immediate healing. We cannot let those who suffered in the hurricanes down. The greatest challenges may be waiting upon the evacuees as they industriously work in their own behalf. They must find the strength to be

responsible to reestablish themselves, and they need our help! When we discover how valuable we are to one another in times like these, then through us, God will save these suffering and scattered people.

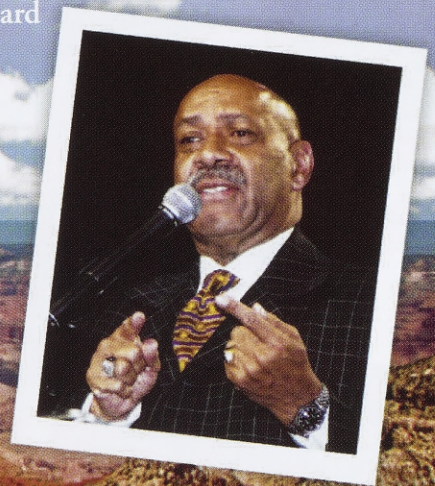
Finally, the suffering of the men, women and children of the hurricane season is not so great that God cannot handle it. They must find the faith in God and the Church to accept what can be done for them. Our Church is an institution that survives on credential reports, and the General Assembly should really look at revamping our financial stewardship. There is sufficient money in this organization, but who is kidding whom? There is not enough money coming up and through the system to give the Church leadership the ability to respond properly to situations like hurricanes. Still, the Presiding Bishop and General Board have the right idea: COGIC Charities and missions! Let's stay together on this one and give and support our leaders. We are responsible to give what they appropriate to God's glory. ☺

Leadership Conference 06

Leadership Conference Successful



Bishop Leroy Anderson

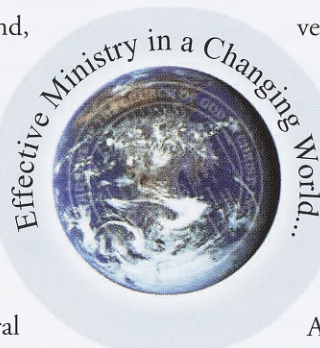


Bishop Jerry Maynard



Phoenix, Arizona- Bishop Jerry Maynard and the Bishop Leroy Anderson welcomed the general Church to the desert. Phoenix is a growing city with brown and gray landscapes of sand, mountains and rustic beauty. Its large population and expansive metropolitan area makes the city a major location in the Southwest United States. Phoenix is more than the once sleepy town where the Cactus League is conducted for major league baseball. It truly is a combination of modern buildings, ideal weather, sports, recreation, art, culture and natural beauty. Mr. Phil Gordon, Mayor of the City proved to be a great host laid the red carpet out for the saints.

This was the first visit of the Church Of God In Christ to Arizona. For years the Church would not contract a convention in Arizona because the state's political leadership refused to recognize Martin L. King's birthday as an official holiday. A couple years ago that all changed and the saints were glad visit in large numbers. Governor Janet Napolitano greeted the saints and opened the entire state to the saints. Bishop Leroy Anderson, General Board member and local prelate and his jurisdictional saints demonstrated the best of Southwestern hospitality.



Leadership Sessions

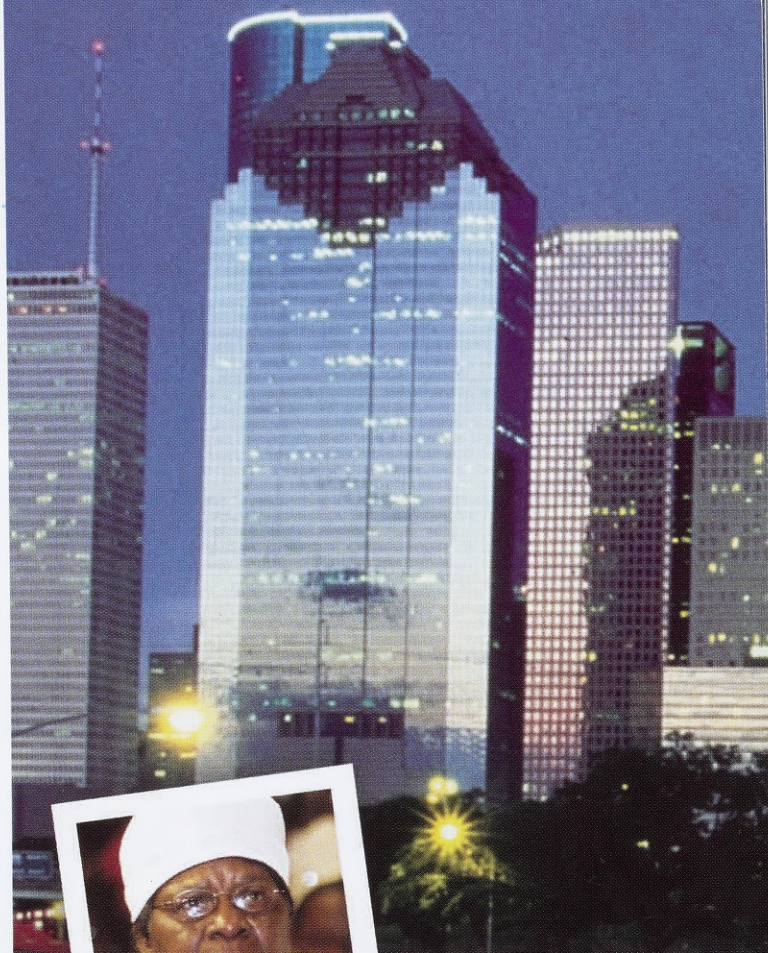
There were more than sixty different courses offered to the delegates. Every type of discipline necessary to build a growing church appeared to be offered. The Leadership Conference is designed to prepare religious professionals for ministry today. Therefore, the General Church uses the first convention of the calendar year as an opportunity to impact local ministries directly. Building expertise and practical skills is as much apart of sanctification as is Bible study. True to our tradition the saints started each morning with prayer. The Presiding Bishop normally blesses the saints with his morning glory worship and instruction. Presiding Bishop G.E. Patterson was unable to attend the conference but spoke to the convention via electronic media. In his place were able instructors and preachers to provide a spiritual word.

Bishop Jerry Maynard and staff had the convention designed very well. Bishop Maynard, who is the Chief Operating Officer for the Church was pleased with the energy and numerical count of the conference. "I was delighted with the total registration numbers of 1132 delegates and we had 201 on site registrations," Bishop Maynard shared with The Whole Truth Magazine. The Chief of Staff knows how important starting the year off with good support and information is for an organization. Bishop was pleased with the level of professionalism demonstrated by all the presenters and those who spoke the word of God nightly. "It is our hope to begin preparation for the Leadership Conference 2007. God will continue to give our leader, Bishop G.E. Patterson the way to train and develop leaders in our Church," Bishop Maynard confidently stated.

The saints totally filled the headquarters hotel and other available hotels. The registration process was very smooth and COGIC Convention Services had registration ready and operating at its best! Everything was done very well by pleasant and helpful persons. Missionary Vickie Johnson and Convention Services deserves praise for coordinating a successful convention. The hotel accommodations were great, the food excellent and the weather perfect.

Bishop Leroy Anderson greeted the saints and was the proverbial proud father introducing his Arizona family to saints from around the country. The jurisdiction is small but growing like the rest of the area. In the future, Phoenix and the state of Arizona will emerge as COGIC country. The saints being in Arizona sparked great enthusiasm for Bishop Anderson and his jurisdiction. He and his wife enjoyed the weather and saints in Arizona so much, they moved there. Now the rest of us know why. ☺

Texas Conventions



Mother Willie Mae Rivers



Drew Sheard

Int'l Women's Convention

May 29 - June 2, 2006

Dallas, Texas

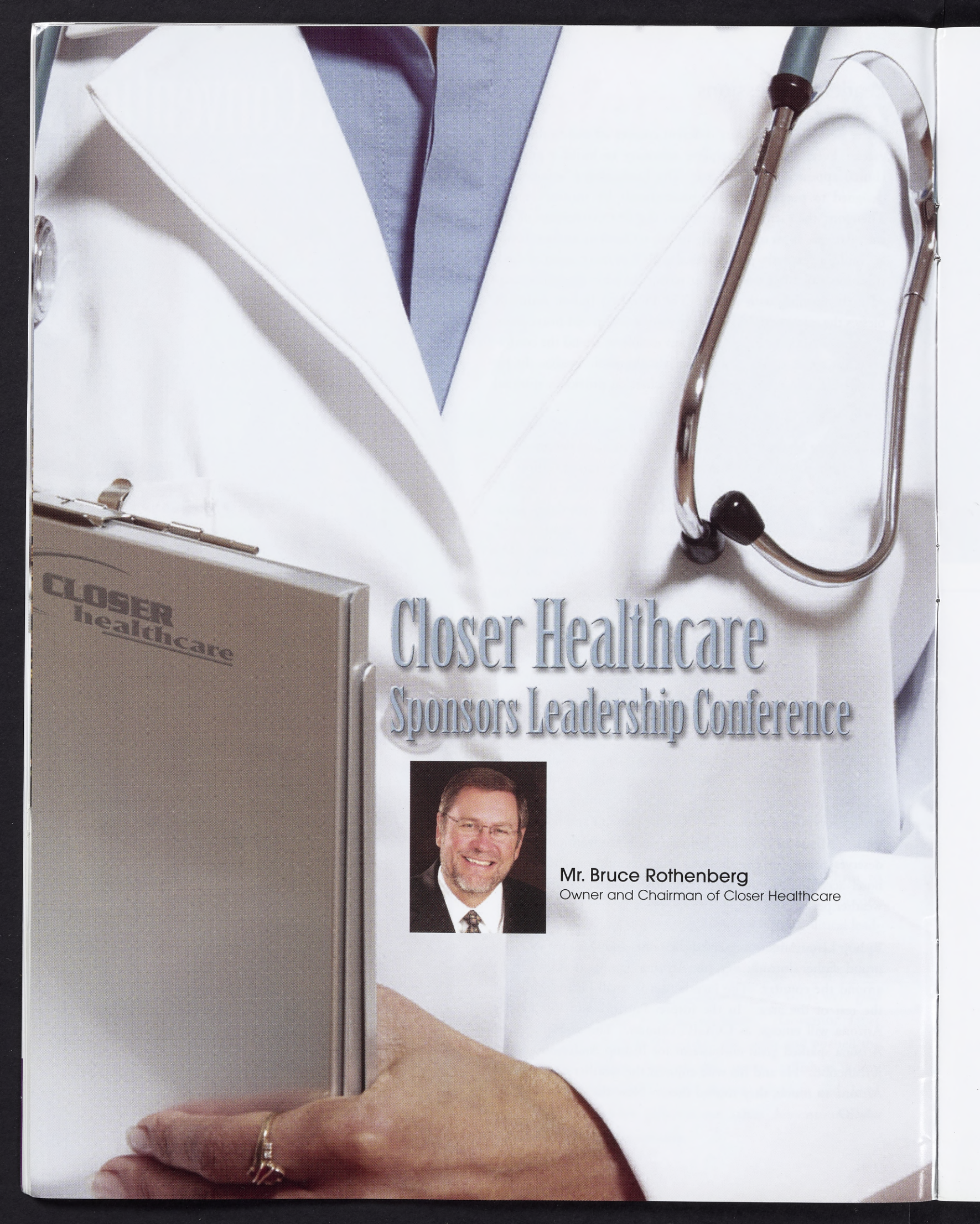
Contact: (901) 775-0600

AIM (Auxiliaries In Ministry)

July 3 - 7, 2006

Houston, Texas

Contact: (510) 783-2202

A close-up photograph of a doctor's torso. The doctor is wearing a white lab coat over a blue shirt and a dark tie. A silver stethoscope is draped around their neck. In the lower-left corner, a hand is holding a silver clipboard. The clipboard has the text "CLOSER healthcare" printed on it in a bold, sans-serif font. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white.

CLOSER
healthcare

Closer Healthcare Sponsors Leadership Conference



Mr. Bruce Rothenberg
Owner and Chairman of Closer Healthcare

Recently, Mr. Bruce Rothenberg, the owner and Chairman of Closer Healthcare attended the Church Of God In Christ's Annual Leadership Conference in beautiful Phoenix, Arizona. Closer Health Care, a company with a true dedication to people, vocalized its commitment, a commitment like that of the Church Of God In Christ, by joining with the 2,000 delegates that met on January 9-12, 2006. Both organizations share a concern for people, specifically African Americans, and realize that they suffer most from diabetes and other chronic illnesses. As a growing supplier of low-cost insulin pumps, diabetes testing strips, and ostomy supplies, Closer Healthcare has found a partner with the Church Of God In Christ. The company's presence, as well as its sponsorship, at the leadership conference proved quite meaningful in establishing a positive working relationship.

Mr. Bruce Rothenberg explained in an interview with The Whole Truth that Closer Healthcare is a business with social/ministry commitments. Closer Health Care has dedicated money and resources into the community to educate people about awareness of chronic illnesses. In conversation with Dr. David Hall, Bruce stated, "We became aware of the Church Of God In Christ through an old business contact, Readus Smith, III. Though, we are a small company of just 43 employees, our mission helped unite Readus and me for educating and supporting a better quality of life among those less served. In America, were people have the best medical facilities and personnel, people in every walk of life are needlessly sick and dying!"

Mr. Rothenberg has initiated a program with the Church Of God In Christ to help deliver information and health supplies. The project, "Community Health Initiative" seeks to reach more than 400,000 Church Of God In Christ members. Bruce indicated statistical evidence suggest that as many as 632,000 prescriptions are written monthly for the saints. Diabetes among the saints is at epidemic proportions. One in three saints will develop the disease at some point in life. Mr. Rothenberg stated, "What is most tragic is that type 2 diabetes, formerly considered an adult disease is becoming common among all children. In the Black and White communities alike, fat and inactive children have hypertension and other adult diseases." Mr. Rothenberg cited that HUCP reports that 27 percent of every medical dollar spent is

wasted due to non compliance. Rothenberg declared, "People need more education, better diets, less expensive drugs and the ability to administer their testing and medicine over a long period of time." "It is proven, those who properly manage their medication and testing live an enhanced quality of life," commented Mr. Rothenberg.

Closer Healthcare's association with the Church Of God In Christ is a business and educational project of significance. "This groundbreaking initiative includes education from the top levels of the Church down to the local member", as the affable Elder Readus Smith, III joined the discussion. Never before has the Church Of God In Christ endeavored to aggressively pursue health issues and this initiative should make for a healthier membership.



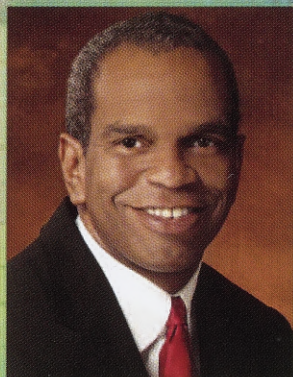
Closer Healthcare, Inc., sponsored the pre convention golf tournament for the Leadership Conference. Mr. Rothenberg is serious about his relationship with the Church and enjoyed the opportunity to socialize with many of the delegates. At a conference mid day luncheon, Rothenberg addressed the gathering. The conference leader-

ship warmly embraced Closer Healthcare. Hopefully, the Church leadership will develop local church and jurisdictional representatives to spread the word and start using the low cost diabetes products of Closer Healthcare. Elder Smith has already traveled to many jurisdictions providing seminars and training sessions for the health initiative. It is Mr. Rothenberg and Elder Smith's intention to motivate the bishops to help local pastors enroll at least five persons from each church within the next 120 days. These persons will be the front line supporters for building compliance and knowledge among local congregants.

When asked what is important for people to know about Closer Healthcare, Inc., Bruce Rothenberg referred to the company's "Mission and Philosophy Statement", "Our mission is to help people with chronic diseases by providing quality products and services while maintaining the highest ethical, legal, and professional standards."

For more information about Closer Healthcare, Inc., call 1-800-882-8055 or find them on the internet at www.closerhealth.com. ☺

COGIC Elder Makes Good With God and Business!



Elder Readus Smith

By Dr. David A. Hall, Sr.

The name Elder Readus Smith is well known throughout the Church Of God In Christ! Most think of Papa Smith, the Director of Transportation, a great guy, and all time goodwill ambassador. However, The Whole Truth is presenting the business executive and entrepreneur: Elder Readus Smith, III.

Readus Smith, III is a progressive and high powered business executive. Readus Smith, III is President of Closer Healthcare, Inc. The company is a growing producer of diabetic testing products, ostomy supplies and provides services through HMO, Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance for everyone. But please, be informed that Readus Smith, III, yet holds a close and meaningful relationship with his natural family and his COGIC roots. Readus, III is as devoted to ministry as he is to business. Readus, III is a preacher who made good in the world of pharmaceutical drug sales, and over the years has promoted entrepreneurial endeavors to benefit the people of God.

Readus Smith, III was born in Memphis, Tennessee as the eldest of 12 children. Growing up in the Church Of God In Christ was no challenge for Readus, III. As a youth teaching Sunday School

at RoseMark Church Of God In Christ was a weekly part of his agenda. Being a very gifted and energetic youth posed more problems for Readus, III than his ability to sing in the local church choir. He always made the best grades and found it too easy in his immediate world of academics and was often bored. His educational pursuits took him to foreign lands and noted universities. Readus is a graduate of Memphis State University (B.A), University of LaSalle (Masters) and Bradford University in England (Masters) and has years of business experience.



Readus, Smith, III is married to Marta and they have four children and two grandchildren. He often reminds them about their heritage in the Lord. Being the grandson of the late Bishop E.W. Rodgers, an associate of Bishop C.H. Mason, makes Readus, III appreciate and value his legacy in the Church Of God In Christ. Readus, III is a man equally at

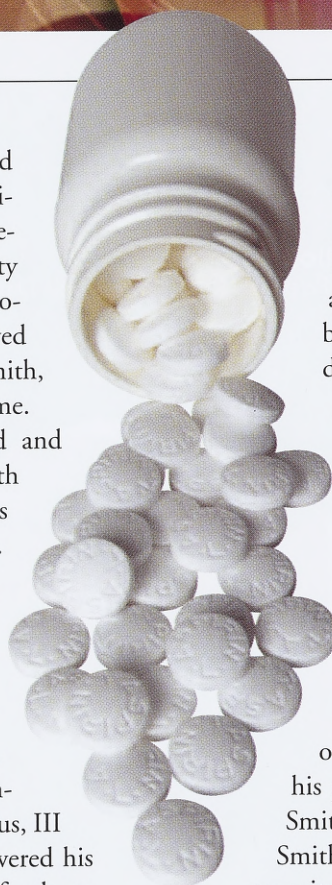
home in the world of business and the Church.

In the world of business, Readus Smith, III is providing groundbreaking business initiatives between minority communities, and now religious communities, and the pharmaceutical business.



The Closer Healthcare business is his Florida- based operation that offers online mail-order pharmaceuticals and diabetic supplies. Basically, a mail order prescriptions business, the sale of low-cost, high-quality medications, vitamins, diabetic, respiratory and ostomy products are made available to the under served community. Being African American, Readus, Smith, III wants to bring the mission and the message home. African American people are often under served and poorly informed about health care. "Our battles with chronic illnesses is legendary", commented Readus Smith, III during the Leadership Conference. Closer Healthcare is committed to breaking down the high rates of disproportionate health problems within the African American community. He is passionate about health and preaches the Word of God with a blend of natural and spiritual health remedies. During the Leadership Conference, he related the story of the church member praying that God would heal his diabetes. Readus, III informed the gentleman, that God heard and answered his prayer. However due to his diet of sweet, starchy foods etc., "the gentleman gave his healing back!"

Elder Readus Smith, III is on a crusade. Closer Healthcare has started a business initiative within the Church Of God In Christ.



Every Church Of God In Christ jurisdiction should have a representative. Furthermore, each pastor is asked to enroll five members to serve as health ambassadors. Through constant education and product awareness, Closer Healthcare will become a household name to the saints. As president of Closer Healthcare, Inc., Readus, III is attempting to make medical prescription and diet compliance within the black community a matter of habit. The results should be lowered incidents of health crises and a better quality of life for those afflicted with our of chronic illness.

How does Elder Readus Smith, II feel about his son? He is a proud father who is glad his eldest son is making good! He remembers the time Readus, III graduated from high school and ordered a hall in the Cook Convention Center for his personal graduation party. That is one story that Smiths, numbers, II and III will have to share! Readus Smith, II, will confess he has always appreciated his son's tenacity and lofty expectations. Now Readus, III is very serious and mission oriented. His new business endeavor was introduced at the Annual Leadership Conference and it mirrored the theme of the convention, "Effective Ministry in a changing world... Dedicated, Determined, Dependable." ☛

World of C.O.G.I.C. Sports

Phoenix, Arizona - **And The World of COGIC Sports** - The 2006 Leadership Convention held its Pre-Conference Golf Tournament. Thirty one players arrived a day early and brought their sticks. Phoenix is renowned for its beautiful winter weather, and many of the golfers left the cold eastern and northern states for a day of fun. The tournament was held at the beautiful Legacy Golf Club and Resort. The Legacy offered some of the best of golf course facilities, club amenities and hospitality in Arizona. The Legacy was indeed first class!

The Ladies went shopping! By looks of some of our beautiful COGIC women, they rate First Team America!

Participants played a best ball competition and had four man teams competing for trophies. The participants were as follows:

The winning teams received First- Third place positions

First Place- Scored 63

Bassett, Hurley
Harris, Lewis
Hines, Russell
Johnson, Trevor

Second Place- Scored 67

Hicks, James
Anderson, Cornelius
Holleman, Nathaniel

Third Place-Scored 68

Johnson, Martin
Houston, David
Penton, John
Shepard, Joe

Individual Contest Winners

Longest Drive: David Hall, Sr
Longest Putt: Robert Cole
Closest to the Pin: Martin Johnson

◀ The Fellows

Andrew Perpenar, John Penton, and David Hall



Participants played a best ball competition and had four man teams competing for trophies. The participants were as follows:

Anderson, Bishop Cornelius

Johnson, Jerry

Bassett, Hurley

Johnson, Bishop Martin

Butt, Bishop Stanford

Johnson, Trevor

Chase, Joseph

Kiel, George

Cole, Robert

May, Thomas

Coleman, Hurley

Penton, John

Hall, Sr. David

Perpener, Andrew

Handy, Tyrone

Perry, Enoch

Harris, Lewis

Roberson, Willie

Henderson, Edwin

Rothenberg, Bruce

Hicks, James

Shepard, Joe

Hines, Russell

Smith, III. Readus

Holleman, Nathaniel

Underwood, Oliver

Hopkins, Jr. Archie

White, Bishop Frank

Hopkins, Sr. Bishop Archie

Witherspoon, Reggie

Houston, Bishop David



Bishop Blake Invites Church



Bishop Charles E. Blake, First Assistant Presiding Bishop is a towering figure across the spectrum of Pentecostal personalities. He is well known for his campaign to feed Africa's hungry and orphaned children. Now, he is deeply involved and helping to develop and promote the Azusa Street Centennial Celebration. Hundreds and thousands of ardent Pentecostal faithful will be attending the April 25-29, 2006, centennial services, and Bishop Blake is acutely aware the Church Of God In Christ should be there in great numbers. Through Bishop C.H. Mason, we have an historic link and legacy with the 1906 revival conduct in Los Angeles.

Convention delegates will come together in Los Angeles, California and praise God for 100 years of growth and spirit-filled blessings. At a time when America is in a period of warfare, moral decline and political intrigue, Pentecostals have an opportunity to proclaim their faith. There is a great need for a genuine religious revival similar to that of Seymour's 1906 effort. The whole world was spiritually impacted in 1906, and the Azusa Street revival introduced a rare opportunity for people of different races, ethnic

groups and stations in life to praise God together. This was a time of extreme racial segregation and prejudice. The Azusa Street Revival and the twentieth century baptism in the spirit made social structure irrelevant. William J. Seymour became a radical prophet and progenitor of Pentecostal religious life in America. His humble but effective conducting of worship brought C.H. Mason and Frank Bartleman and others into the knowledge of spiritual baptism. From that gathering came the world's great Pentecostal denominations.



Bishop Charles E. Blake

Bishop Blake encouraged the delegates at the 98th Holy Convocation to take advantage of the centennial celebration. Registration and accommodations are easily obtainable on the official web page (www.azusastreet100.net) announcing the celebration. For the delegates' convenience, there will be complimentary shuttle service between the hotels and the Los Angeles Convention Center. An array of tremendous speakers and worship leaders will make the April convention one to attend. Hopefully, hundreds of saints will travel to Los Angeles and give COGIC support to what many expect to be the largest gathering of saints in the world.

The entire religious world shall be watching. Bishop Blake's massive West Angeles congregation is one of the landmark churches for all the Church Of God In Christ. Their new sanctuary is a show case of splendid architecture and is representative of how far Pentecostal congregations have evolved. West Angeles' progressive ministerial profile and Pentecostal flavor is renown the world over. Bishop Blake's local congregation represents the best of what modern day Pentecostalism is and they have carried the COGIC torch during the organizing of this event. The Church Of God In Christ definitely belongs in the foreground of the coming event. Bishop Blake's invitation beckons the COGIC faithful from over the world to join him and West Angeles at the convention.

The meeting is not simply another meeting on the Church Of God In Christ calendar of activities. This convention is one for the ages and shall be record in the next stage of Pentecostal history. ☪

And Other Sheep!

Editor's Note

During the hardship of the recent hurricane disaster many people and groups worked untiringly for the benefit of society. We share this space in The Whole Truth to inform you of just such a group that served during the emergency.

On August 29, 2005 Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast of the United States. Months later, the nation still struggles to understand the implications of the largest and most costly natural disaster in the history of our country. The scope of the destruction was so widespread that existing relief organizations were unable to address the unprecedented need.

Individuals and groups from all walks of life began to look for ways to help the devastated coast. One of the most prominent and successful alliances formed during the initial response was the partnership between the Ministerial Alliance from Bastrop, Texas, and a group who playfully called themselves REMA (Rainbow Emergency Management Assembly). Though their ideologies and backgrounds differed, both groups set aside personal agendas to focus on the needs of the people of Waveland, Mississippi and established a functional kitchen and distribution center within days of the disaster, feeding three thousand displaced residents a day at the New Waveland Café.

Inspired by the success of their efforts and eager to continue their work, volunteers began the process of attaining non-profit status under the IHC (International Humanity Center) while finding a new community in which to establish. St. Bernard Parish met perfectly the criteria sought: a high population in an area of

The convention web page list six purposes behind the convention.

1. To bring together all the various groups of the movement.
2. To commemorate the rich heritage of the movement
3. To lift up the diversity while demonstrating the unity of the movement
4. To celebrate the dynamic progress the movement has achieved the first 100 years
5. To evaluate the movement's response to divine mandates given at Azusa Street
6. To seek God the movement's future direction

heavy destruction in conjunction with the support and enthusiasm of local government. A New Orleans suburb that abuts the southeastern border of the city, St. Bernard Parish lies just blocks from the levee break that doomed the Lower 9th Ward. Nearly 40,000 residences and businesses were inundated for days, and a large majority of the city's buildings were deemed unrecoverable.

The municipality has been unable to secure commitments from national grocers and retailers and is unable to provide even the most basic needs to returning residents: there are no banks, grocery stores or restaurants in the immediate area.

Newly reformed as the apolitical, non-denominational non-profit "Emergency Communities," volunteers set up camp in the back parking lot of what had been an off-track betting parlor in the heart of St. Bernard. On Dec. 12th, the first meal was served at the Made with Love Café. For most residents and workers, it was the first wholesome meal they had enjoyed since arriving in the area. We are now serving over 2000 meals a day.

As residents return to take stock of their scattered belongings and attempt to rebuild their homes, EC continues to grow in scope and ability. Volunteers live in tents onsite and eat and subsist alongside returning residents in a cluster of domes.

(Continued on page 22.)



2006

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 2006

Annual Leadership
Conference
January 9-12, 2006
Phoenix, Arizona



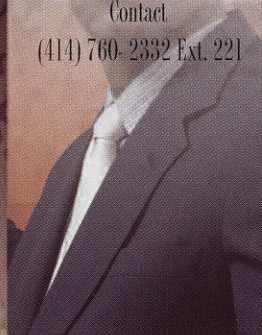
April 2006

Annual Spring
Call Meeting
April 4-6, 2006

Memphis, Tennessee
Contact
(866) 522-1331

May 2006

Men's Conference
May 3-5, 2006
Greensboro, North Carolina
Contact
(414) 760-2332 Ext. 221



May 2006

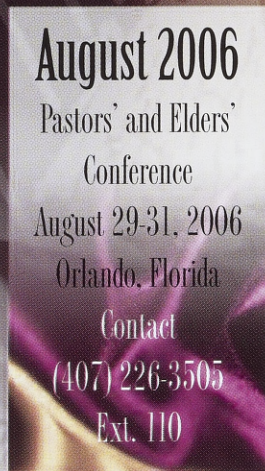
International
Women's Convention
May 29- June 2,
2006
Dallas, Texas
Contact
(901) 775-0600

July 2006

AIM (Auxiliaries In
Ministry)
July 3-7, 2006
Houston, Texas
Contact
(501) 783-2202

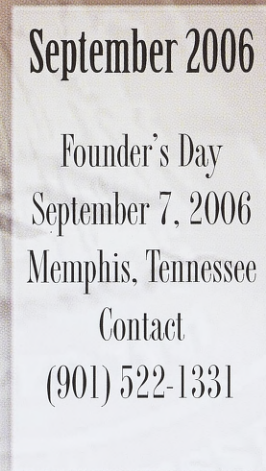
August 2006

Pastors' and Elders'
Conference
August 29-31, 2006
Orlando, Florida
Contact
(407) 226-3505
Ext. 110



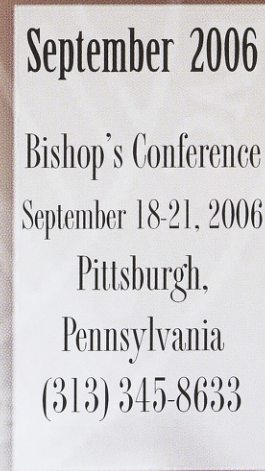
September 2006

Founder's Day
September 7, 2006
Memphis, Tennessee
Contact
(901) 522-1331



September 2006

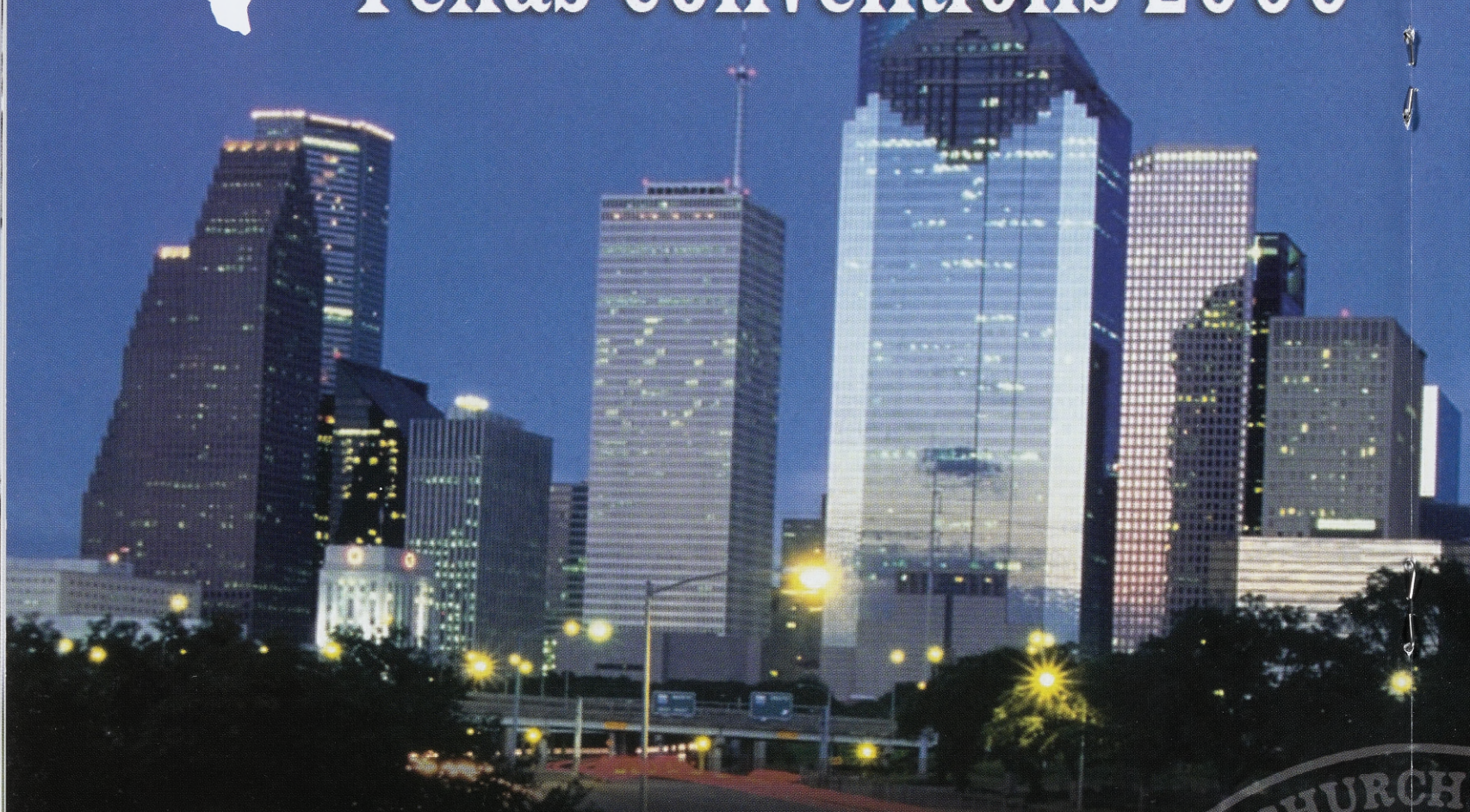
Bishop's Conference
September 18-21, 2006
Pittsburgh,
Pennsylvania
(313) 345-8633



International Holy Convocation
November 6-14, 2006 • Memphis, Tennessee
Contact (901) 522-1331



Texas Conventions 2006



Mother Willie Mae Rivers

Int'l Women's Convention
May 29 - June 2, 2006
Dallas, Texas

Contact: (901) 775-0600





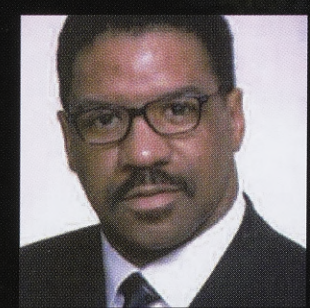
AIM

(Auxiliaries In Ministry)

July 3 - 7, 2006

Houston, Texas

Contact: (510) 783-2202



Drew Sheard



COGIC's Oldest Preaching...

Elder Celebrates His 104th Birthday

Reverend Claude Lang

Sunday, March 12, 2006, The Paradise Temple Church of God In Christ hosted a 104th birthday celebration for Elder Claude Lang, Sr. Pastor Claude Lang, Jr. and his sisters gave their venerable father a royal day in Chicago, Illinois. Clergy, civic leaders, community, and family members hailed the accomplishments of Elder Lang's life and ministry. Special tributes were offered by Bishop Robert R. Sanders and Elder David Blakely.

Reverend Claude Lang was born on March 6, 1902 to Fredrick and Annabelle Lang in Clark County in - Langsdale, Mississippi. He is a descendent of Smiley and Lou Lang, his grandparents, Colonel Clement Davenport Lang - better known as "Clem", his great-grandfather; and General William A. Lang; his great-great-grandfather. His mother passed when he was a very young child and he was taken in and raised by his grandparents when his father moved to New Orleans to work.

Reverend Lang has devoted more than 76 years of his life to evangelistic ministry and has led many souls to Christ. Through his evangelistic pioneering work, he has helped to organize, as well as strengthen, many startup and small churches in Indiana and Illinois. As a servant of Christ, he has devoted numerous hours to visiting the sick and being a good citizen, neighbor and family leader. He also worked for the Youngstown Sheet and Tube Steel Company for 28 years until his retirement in 1969.

In 1932, he married Hazel Natalie Watson, a church pianist and he was a devoted husband, caregiver and friend for sixty years, until her passing in 1992. In 1994, he married Missionary Sara Magee. They enjoyed Christian devotion together until her untimely death seven months into the marriage. In 1996, he married Ida Lacefield an accomplished musician and cake baker. They enjoyed an active marriage traveling and participating in family and church activities until her passing in November 2005.

The family patriarch, he is the biological father to 6 children, 37 grandchildren, 64 great-grandchildren and 31 great-great-grandchildren, and step-father to numerous step-children and grand and great-grand step-children. He is a man that continues to exhibit a great zest for life!

In 2000, at the age of 98, Reverend Lang traveled to the Lang Plantation in Langsdale, Mississippi after 50 years to visit the plantation mansion where his grandfather was born more than

142 years ago. He enjoyed lemonade in the parlor while his wife, Ida played the harpsichord; and he and his children walked the land that his father and forefathers had walked before him. The pilgrimage allowed him to recall the experiences of his youth, the love and history of family and the remembrance of his grandfather's stories. He is a man rich in memories and love for family.

Throughout his 104 years, he has demonstrated the phenomenal ability to embrace and adapt to the adversities and challenges that accompany longevity, as well as those challenges associated with living life as an African-American male. He is a man of great wisdom...He is a "Living Legend" of our time. ☪

(Continued from page 18)

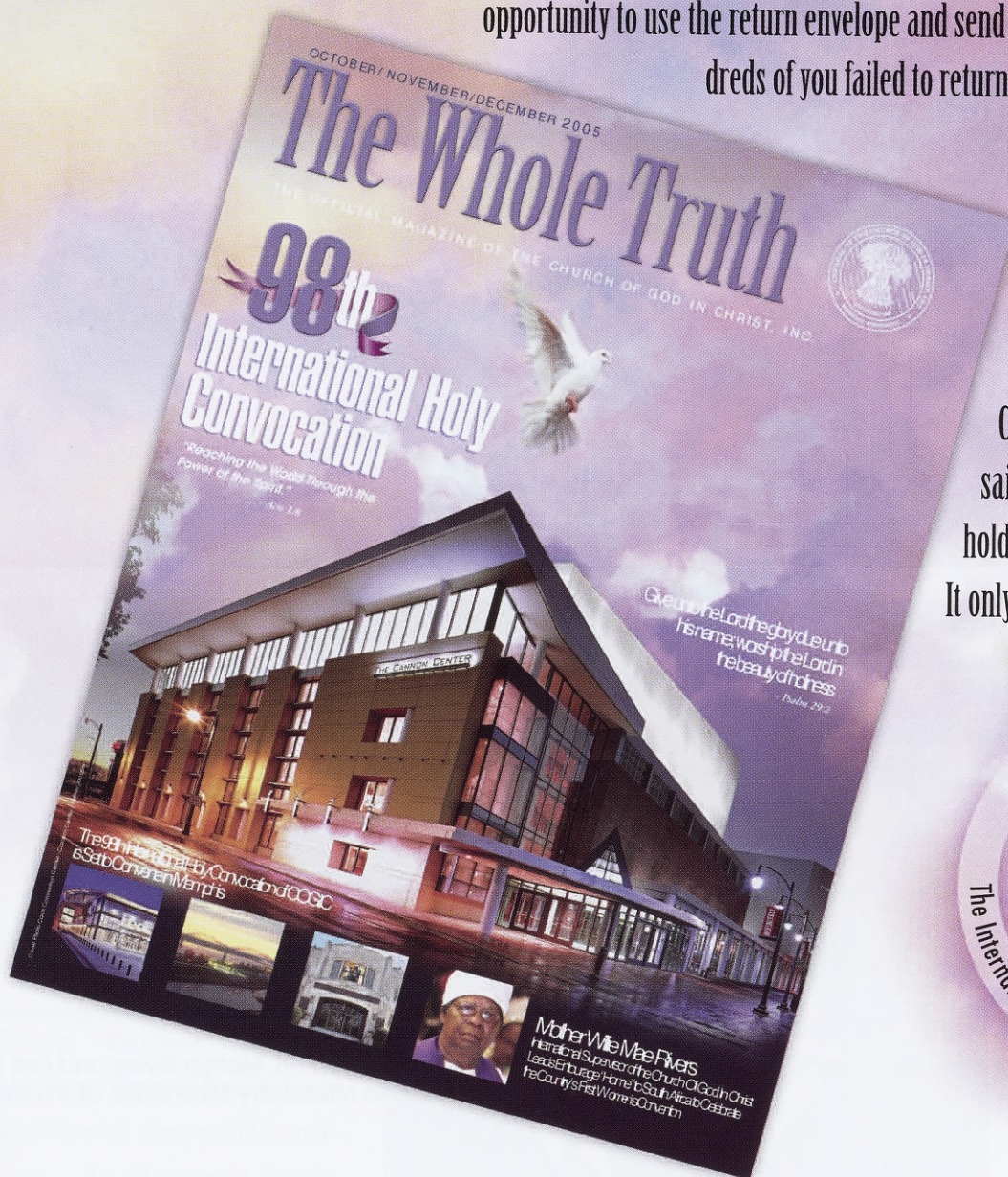


The Made with Love Café has become a community center providing everything from basic supplies to much needed entertainment, with the aim of going beyond simple sustenance to holistically nourish the entire community. As volunteers give their energy and love to the community, the community responds in kind, sharing not only food but camaraderie and routine, recalling some semblance of their past lives otherwise lost in the flood. Creating beauty and harmony in such a bleak and contaminated environment is no small task. In doing so, the volunteers from Emergency Communities have made the seemingly impossible task of rebuilding a city more plausible.

This is Emergency Communities' first completely independent undertaking, and as they hurry to submit grant applications and secure other means of funding, they rely entirely on personal donations. In order to continue to serve this community still so in need, Emergency Communities needs help. To find out what you can do, or for more information on EC, IHC and the Made with Love Café, please see their website: www.emergencycommunities.org ☪

Did You Renew Your Subscription?

Last December the staff at the Publishing House mailed a renewal notice to your house. A hundreds of you took the opportunity to use the return envelope and send the payment back. Many hundreds of you failed to return the envelope.



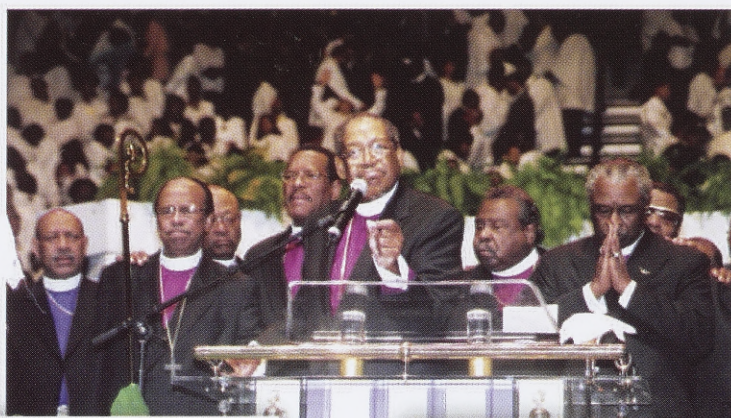
The Whole Truth Magazine is constantly upgrading and attempting to provide timely and important news of the Church Of God In Christ. Every saint but especially credential holders should receive the magazine. It only cost \$20.00.



It is not too late!

Simply find the letter or seek the order blank in the magazine.
Mail it in and enjoy the best new magazine in the Faith: **The Whole Truth.**

98th International Holy Convocation



◀ Official Day
Memphis - Presiding Bishop
G.E. Patterson preached
an anointed message.
The General Board
prayerfully listened.



▲ The audience at FedEx Forum was one of four locations on
Official Day.



▲ General Supervisor of Women, Mother Rivers and First lady
Louise, Mother and Missionary Mae Blake at worship

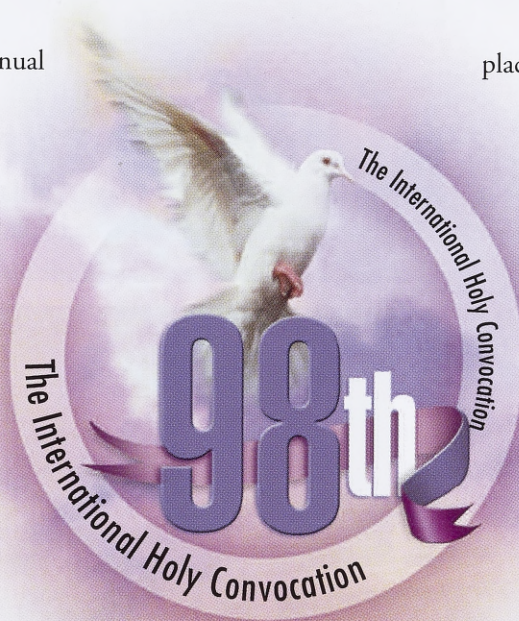
Memphis, TN. The 98th International Holy Convocation was conducted in Memphis, Tennessee, November 7-15, 2005 with the usual flair and spirit. A review of the worship, the people and all the events that make up the love feast read like Acts Chapter Two. It was a spirit filled blessing for the thousands of delegates that traveled from around the world to attend. The character of the meet-

ing was shaped by the prominent and overall splendid presentation of Presiding Bishop Gilbert Earl Patterson. Revelations of his illness sparked consecrated prayer the world over. Standing before the saints, Bishop Patterson offered in depth preaching and instruction in the Word, that has made him renowned the world over. God blessed Bishop Patterson and he blessed the saints.

What more can be stated about our annual pilgrimage to Memphis? The theme accented the gathering from the very first moment of the prayer and consecration: AReaching the World - Through the Power of the Spirit.@ From Africa, Europe, Asia, South America and from Islands that dot the oceans. The convocation was a renewal of the Day of Pentecost and we modern day saints rejoiced in God's grace day and night! As we approach the coming 100th year celebration of the AZUSA Street Revival, we saints are enthusiastic about our faith and worship of God. The Holy Convocation is our celebration and rehearsal for heaven.

Bishop Patterson and General Board made all provisions for the saints. All services were assessable and comfortable in the spacious Cook Convention Center, and for Official Day we saints ventured to the Fedex Forum. The Convention Services brought home the fruits of a well planned labor of love. Missionary Vickie Johnson and staff deserve our appreciation for their hard work. Bishop Jerry Maynard and all the national staff did everything possible to make the saints feel at home.

Bishop Patterson provided Morning Glory and guided our worship with dignity and sacredness. As Missionary Louise Patterson looked on, it was apparent Bishop Patterson was ready to preach. The schedule of preachers and missionaries were splendid, and they fed the saints at worship with spiritual food. Bishop Patterson's Sunday Official Day sermon was viewed by thousands of saints assembled in the Fedex Forum, the Cook Convention Center, at Mason Temple and at Bountiful Blessings COGIC. The message was broadcasted via television to each



place of worship. The ingenuity of technology made it possible for 40,000 people to see our leader preach that Sunday morning.

During the week the Church hosted the annual COGIC Charities Banquet. Ambassador Andrew Young was the banquet keynote speaker. COGIC Charities is the philanthropic arm of the Church and Bishop Patterson was clear about our intent to help the evacuees from both Hurricane Katrina and

Rita. The Holy Convocation became a secondary recruitment station for relief and support of the saints and congregations most devastated by the class 5 hurricanes. The program of our leader added a necessary social dimension to the convocation, and this year it was truly significant!

The week scheduled of preaching and training sessions went day and night. Among the more notable messages were long time friend of the Church, Bishop Gerald Glenn. He asked the saints, Are You an Effective Member of an Effective Church?@ His critique of Christian commitment and quality of service hit home.

Bishop C. E. Blake, Bishops William Scott, Evangelist Joyce Rogers and so many others preached our souls happy and convicted hearts and minds. It was indeed powerful!

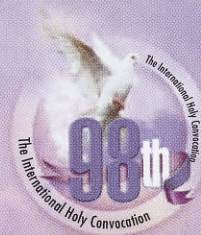
Anyone who witnessed the Spirit, immensity and working of the convention, would affirm that good planning and dedica-



Andrew Young and Bishop G.E. Patterson

tion paid off. Maybe, the saints will always come to Memphis for the annual meeting. If the rich blessing and anointed word of God continues to impact us, our numbers will continue to grow every year the Holy Convocation is conducted. ❶

98th International Holy Convocation



Evg. Betty Nelson sang



Bishop Malcom Coby anointed the Saints



Bishop J.H. Haynes
rocked the house



Bishop G.E. Patterson presented morning glory

Bishop Scott preached
the communion message



Bishop Gerald Glenn
preached Sunday
evening



Bishop Michael Cole blow his Ram's horn



Bishop J.O. Patterson spoke of God's Goodness





The Prosperity Gospel

(Positive Confession, Prosperity Teaching, or Word of Faith: Socio-economic and Theological Implications for the Pentecostal Church) **Part One**

By Bishop Martin L. Johnson

Within the Black Christian community, historically, the black pulpit has been a platform from which there has been exerted a tremendous amount of pressure; insightful information has been disseminated, upon which, opinions have been shaped and revolutionary movements have been actualized. The black preachers as the spokespersons for their churches, and molders of faith for their congregations have played an invaluable role in shaping the nature and destiny of the black community specifically and the American community in general. It is obvious that religion will continue to have a great influence on setting the moral and ethical norms of the culture, and the preachers of religion(s), it seems to me, must continually involve themselves in ensuring "right doctrines." Whether the preacher is a "sometime theologian", or one whose life is given to academia, the Biblical record demands and the people need the clearest possible interpretation and presentation of the Gospel.


New doctrines, new theologies, new sects and new cults have been a part of the landscape of Christianity since the disciples were first called Christians. Jesus was not necessarily a Christian as is understood as being a part of a formalized earthly religious movement; however, the teachings he espoused and the life he lived eventually resulted in the founding of the Christian community. The earliest Christian community, or the "Primitive Church", spent much of its primitive existence defending the tenets of the Faith against Gnosticism, Arianism and Apollinarianism. The only thing that saved the early church from these heresies was strong, thorough and accurate hermeneutics and exegesis that resulted in good theological work. The relatively recent arrival on the American religious scene, and perhaps, the world religious scene, is the Word of Life and Prosperity Theology/Gospel movement. While the movement/cult is a relatively recent phenomenon on the religious horizon in America, the very doctrines that the movement espouses and the promises that the Prosperity Gospel makes have demanded the attention of the mainline churches and denominations in America. Today the Word of Life Theology is worldwide in scope and is deeply root-

ed in the exponent's of the movement's hermeneutical approach; and, the movement had its origins within the confines of the Christian Church. The movement had its origins in the preaching of the Reverend E.W. Kenyon, who experimented with a number of religions, to include Pentecostalism, and the Reverend Kenneth E. Hagin, and he since the 1970's has been hailed as the shaper and leader of the Prosperity Theology Movement. However, the Prosperity Gospel Theology and its concepts have taken roots in America and have transcended racial, ethnic, and denominational boundaries. My task today is to focus on the "Socio-Economic and Theological Implications of the Prosperity Gospel for the Pentecostal Church."

While certain modes of worship and behavioral pattern in the Black Church suggest that Black religion, or the religion(s) of Blacks developed in Africa and survived the barracoons, the "Middle Passage" and ore than two hundred years of slavery. The Black Church (not the Invisible Institution) had its origin as a cult within the white denominations. Bishop Richard Allen and Absalom Jones are eternal testimonies to that ecclesiastical reality. As quiet as it has been kept, the Bishop Richard Allen-Absalom protest efforts have essentially the same elements as a Martin Luther, except the former was theological and the latter was both theological and racial in protest. However, while Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation produced a theology that massively asserted the centrality of God and the primacy of His grace in the salvation of humanity through Jesus Christ, Bishop Richard Allen and Absalom Jones asserted the equal inherent worth and dignity of all of God's children, the Christian Church is once again called upon to espouse right doctrine in the light of the onslaught of new sects and cults that masquerade across the religious landscape of the community.

The Prosperity Gospel/theology has as a part of its basic teachings the "Spirit, Soul, and Body" concept, which teaches that the person is spirit, has a soul, but lives in a body. In that teaching

(The Prosperity Gospel continued on 39)

A black and white portrait of Mrs. Elsie Washington Mason, a woman with short, dark, wavy hair, wearing a dark jacket with a small brooch. The background is a soft-focus image of roses. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

COGIC Bids Farewell to Bishop Mason's Wife

By Patricia A. Rogers

*Mrs. Elsie
Washington Mason
Church Of God In Christ Founder's Wife
1907 - 2006*

Memphis, TN – Mother Elsie Louise Washington Mason, widow of COGIC's founder Bishop Charles Harrison Mason, was given a homegoing celebration at Temple of Deliverance COGIC on February 6th at high noon.

The euphoric service bided her earthly presence farewell and Godspeed to her eternal home in Glory, after a long and fruitful life at the age of 98. While living on the historic and holy premises of Mason Temple in a spacious home with caregivers around-the-clock, she not only preserved the spiritual legacy of Bishop Mason, but she was a living epistle and a living testimony of her own faith and religious convictions.

"We are gathered not because she is now asleep, but she lived and we thank God for her life," Bishop Jerry Maynard, Chief Operating Officer for COGIC who presided over the service said. "A sojourner as our Founder – so was our Founder's wife."

The nearly 70 voices of Temple of Deliverance's combined choirs performed an old familiar opening hymn of comfort, "I Am Thine, O Lord" which reminded those in attendance of the era and generation Mother Mason originated from. A host of Bishops, Pastors, Elders and scores of Missionaries from COGIC were present to witness an historical moment.

"We came to show this great family our love and respect to this great woman of God," Bishop Samuel L. Lowe, National Treasurer for COGIC who prayed fervently. "Our Founder's wife who has labored in this great Church Of God In Christ can now retire from these mundane shores to be with the Lord in the Heavens. She is a Saint who has brought great honor to God's name that you can live right and honorable in this present world."

Eternally Respected-Tributes Celebrate a Gracious, Beautiful Woman of God.

Mother Madie Flagg Porter, State Supervisor for Tennessee Central Jurisdiction and the wife of Bishop W. L. Porter who was one of many caregivers, remembers Mother Elise as a "dedicated Saint who has wisdom."

"I have known her personally for over 30 years," Mother Porter pointed out. "You had to know her, to know her. It was a blessing to go over there and sit in Bishop Mason's chair." She brought the crowd to laughter when she noticed on one visit how Mother Mason was consistently smiling after Presiding Bishop G. E. Patterson had paid her a visit. "I knew the Presiding Bishop had

put something in her hand," she said.

The General Supervisor Remembers Mother Mason

Mother Willie Mae Rivers, General Supervisor for the Department of Women said she was present because she lived. She recalled in the 1950s when Bishop Mason and Mother Elsie came to South Carolina. "I really admired them," she said. "She was so beautiful. I visited Mother Elsie every time I came to Memphis. She would sing a song and her wise counsel was a joy to my heart."

Elder A. Z. Hall, General Secretary for COGIC, puts his own metaphor of Mother Mason together – threaded with his own signature, inspirational tribute. "When I first met Mother Mason it was like seeing a Hollywood star for the first-time," Elder Hall said.



Mother Elsie Louise Washington Mason

Another tribute came from Dr. Alvin H. Crawford, who spoke on behalf of the Mason family. "You were there when we needed you," Dr. Crawford said glancing at her coffin dripping with dozens of pink roses. "The impact of your generosity. You were a spiritual role model for all of our families. The matriarch of all our family members." He added that Bishop Mason was the visionary. Mother Elsie was the missionary!

A resolution was presented to the family by the COGIC Board of Bishops.

Bishop Samuel Green, a General Board member, introduced the Presiding Bishop.

"We have the greatest preacher in the world because we are the greatest people in the world," Bishop Green said.

Presiding Bishop's Message Brings Mother Mason to Life

There is no protocol for the Founder's wife funeral, according to the Presiding Bishop. He felt it was fitting to honor Mother Mason with a program tailored and designed for a Bishop. He told the crowd that he paid her a visit and prayed for her about 90 minutes before she made her heavenly transition.

"I saw her at 2 p.m.," Bishop Patterson recalls. "I prayed that God would not let her suffer. When I left her, she was still alive."

"There is no way to honor such a great woman," Bishop Patterson said. "Looking at the obituary, she was a tremendous person in her own right." Some folks asked, why would Dad

Mason marry such a young woman? Bishop Patterson answered the question with a little bit of humor.

"Bishop Mason was consecrated to God, but every bit a man," he chuckled. "Mother Mason was a beautiful woman. She was a fountain of wisdom. She had the wisdom of the years, and the love for God and the Church."

He elaborated on how Mother Mason witnessed the growth of COGIC in her lifetime. Then he took his text from (II Corinthians 5:6-8), which the Apostle Paul explains about being absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

"The real individual is the soul and the spirit," he preached. "The real individual is the spirit inside that person. The spirit does not die. Jesus referred to one who was dead as one who did not know him. The spirit man does not die, but just moved out. Mother Mason lived 98 years. A woman of good works. She did a lot of things for God and the Church."

He ended his message on a whirlwind that Mother Mason was ready to spend eternity with God. "I can hear her say, I'm ready to sing with the angelic chorus," he concluded. "Elsie, you left us. You left us sad, but some glad morning when this life is over, I'll fly away!"

"When Bishop G. E. delivers a eulogy it makes you feel better about those who passed," commented District Missionary Dessie E. Lee. "Bishop G. E. is something else."

Mother Mason's final resting place was in a mausoleum at New Park Cemetery. S. W. Qualls Funeral Home, owned by Mrs. Ceneta W. Qualls, Mother Mason's sister, had charge of final arrangements.

The Legacy of Mother Elsie Louise W. Mason Her Witness, Her Walk, Her Elegance, Her Class

As the wife of Bishop Mason, she lived a fruitful life marked by a steadfast love for God and humble servitude. Mother Mason fulfilled her calling and continued Bishop Mason's work through work in COGIC.

She served as a Missionary and an Evangelist in Haiti, where she helped build and establish churches and orphanage. She served as the Executive Secretary for the Home and Foreign Missions Department, and the National Tithing Fund.

An advocate for education, she was a substitute teacher in the Memphis and New York Public Schools. She taught for three years at the Saints Industrial and Literary School in Lexington, Mississippi.

A Journalist in her own right, Mother Mason was the editor of "The Whole Truth Newspaper" and produced the first souvenir journal for the church. She wrote and published, "From the Beginning of Bishop C. H. Mason and the Early Pioneers of the Church Of God In Christ." She recently completed work on a book about the church, "The Great Cloud of Witnesses."

In addition to her church work, Mother Mason was a dedicated civil rights activist. When the sanitation workers were on strike, they met at Mason Temple and she made the first donation of \$90 of her own money to buy food for them.

Mason and Mother Elsie were an exceptional couple united by heart and spirit. Their fairy-tale marriage took place in New York in 1944. Bishop Mason was in his 70s, and she was in her 30s. Mother Mason was not just marrying a man, but a man of God who was called with a worldwide, international ministry. ☪

(The Prosperity Gospel continued from 27)

the spirit is identified as a person in a body but the body is inferior to the spirit; the Prosperity Gospel theology also has a position on the nature of sin, Satan and demons. Sin is a part of the non-Christian man but it is overcome when man becomes spiritual and perfect, which is freedom from sin. Satan, for them, is "the god of this world" and demons are diseases, poverty, suffering, and misfortune. A core component of the Positive Confession group (Prosperity Gospel group, Word of Faith group) is the emphasis on the "Spoken Word", or that the power lies more in what one says rather than in what one trusts and believes. The term "positive confession" suggests that words have creative powers; or, it is what you say that has the determining power, or the power to demand God to grant your requests. This

goes along the line of the "name-it and claim-it" theology. These theologies are at best an abuse of scriptures and they do almost irreparable damage and violence to the texts they cite for support. One of the negative implications of the name-it and claim-it theology is its lack of advocating a hard-word ethic as a means of financial prosperity; having said that, then the question arises: what are the drawbacks to that kind of theology being promulgated among the economically poor, and possibly, the substandardly educated, with limited theological skills? This is bad economics! This approach to success has the potential of "quick-fix-it" attitudes and fosters laziness. On the other hand this theology of economics fails to emphasize the "divine-human enterprise" for economic success; it places ninety-nine percent of the responsibility for success on God. ☪

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Founder's Daughter Makes Eternal Transition

Mother Julia Louise Mason Atkins

By Patricia A. Rogers

Memphis, TN- Julia Louise Mason Atkins, daughter of Church Of God In Christ founder, Bishop Charles H. Mason and Lelia Washington Mason, soared to her eternal heavenly home on Thanksgiving Day of heart failure at Methodist University Hospital in Memphis. She was 87. A memorial service and a National COGIC homegoing celebration took place at Pentecostal Temple Institutional COGIC, where her nephew, Bishop J.O. Patterson, Jr., serves as pastor. On December 2, 2005, the fitting tributes were tailored to celebrate her rich life and legacy as the Founder's daughter, a devout church member, an advocate for education, and a graceful socialite.

Superintendent Dickerson Wells, a General Trustee Board member, presided over the sacred service after coordinating respectable arrangements fit for a King's daughter.

The outpouring expressed the popular appeal of Julia Mason Atkins, who was seen numerous times in the last days of her life at the 98th Holy Convocation in apparently good health.

Bishop Samuel L. Lowe, General Treasurer of the Church Of

God In Christ gave the opening prayer. "The love of God extended the years of her life," Bishop Lowe said. "We thank God for the longevity the Lord gave her on this earth. We realize it could have been much shorter."

Presiding Bishop G.E. Patterson Delivers an Uplifting, Prophetic Eulogy



Presiding Bishop G.E. Patterson greets General Supervisor, Mother Willie Mae Rivers, after homegoing service for Mother Atkins. Elder R.L. Williams and Mother River's adjutant, Missionary Dianne Bogan, look on.

Presiding Bishop G.E. Patterson sent Mother Atkins off on a high note! Before taking his text, he lifted burdens with a joyous, musical rendition of "I Shall Know Him." Friends and family in attendance knew Mother Atkins loved the Lord. They had on their garments of praise and responded by standing to their feet with a hand clapping, foot stomping sanctified tribute.

When the Holy Ghost dust finally settled, Bishop Patterson said, "We have assembled today with a sense of amazement. When I heard of her homegoing, it was most shocking to me. When you experience people you love going home, it's a personal loss." Bishop Patterson referred to his text from Acts. He made an analogy between Bishop Mason and

the disciple Phillip, who established a church and had four daughters that prophesied.

"Bishop Mason was an evangelist," he said with strong religious conviction. "He had five daughters but only four who prophesied. They were consecrated and spread the Word." He named them one by one- Deborah Mason Patterson, Lelia (Tiny) Mason Byas, Ruth Mason Lewis, and Julia Mason Atkins. "These daughters stepped into the shoes their Papa, Bishop Mason, and they preached and taught the word."

Bishop Patterson made reference to growing up as a young lad and seeing Dad Mason at Holy Temple COGIC. Mother Atkins often gave Bishop Patterson accolades about the great job he is doing as leader of the Church Of God In Christ. She said, "You are doing a great job, and Papa would be proud of you."

"You got to lay some timber for yourself," Bishop Patterson preached. "It doesn't matter who you are connected to." Looking over the pews, nearly all of those assembled in Pentecostal Temple rose to their feet in agreement. The Presiding Bishop more than sufficiently preached a noble and inspirational eulogy, worthy of a King's daughter.

Other Memorable Tributes

Mother Willie Mae Rivers, General Supervisor of Women, spoke on behalf of the Department of Women, "I am here because Julia lived," she said. "She touched my life. The Mason family became a part of my life while South Carolina Jurisdiction was in transition during 1974. Bishop Jacob Cohen was Interim Prelate and brought Mother Atkins to help organize the women." She told us about Papa and the great times they shared in the Church Of God In Christ.

Elder A.Z. Hall, Jr., General Secretary of the Church Of God In Christ, spoke from the heart on behalf of the General Church. He had fond memories of Mother Atkins while working in the late Presiding Bishop J.O. Patterson's office. "She knew how to encourage you," Hall said. He compared her to a fireman. "Mother Atkins had the tenacity to put out more fires than you will ever know. She did so much for so many people," he said.

Another memorable tribute came from Dr. David Hall, Sr., pastor of the "founder's church" Temple Church Of God In Christ, and an Administrative Assistant to Bishop J.O. Patterson, Jr. "She gave the best to the Master," Dr. Hall commented. She was nurtured in Christ and sanctification. Mason Atkins died on a day when families gathered to give thanks.

Supervisor Lee Ella Smith of Tennessee Fourth Jurisdiction, who worked closely with Mother Atkins with the C.H. Mason Foundation, said, "Mother Atkins was very neat and she had a place for everything. She was such an orderly and precious person."

Noted songstress, Sister Sarah Jordan Powell was an invited guest in the home of Mother Atkins during the 98th Holy Convocation. Sister Powell recalled how she observed Mother Atkins kneeling in prayer for a very long time. That silent beautiful moment inspired Sister Jordan to pay musical tribute with "It Is Well With My Soul." Another musical tribute was a song by Sister Dorcas Hill, "We Shall Behold Him."

Mother Atkins' Religious, Professional & Social Accomplishments

A graduate of Booker T. Washington High School, she earned a Bachelor's of Science degree from West Virginia State College in Charleston, Virginia. She was a staff member at Tennessee State University. In 1941, she married Dr. Leland Atkins. There were no children born.

Mother Atkins served the General Church as a 35 year member and Executive Director of the Charles Harrison Mason Foundation. She was also the Office Manger for the Office of the Presiding Bishop for the late Bishop J. O. Patterson, Sr.

A charming and elegant socialite, she was the president of Links, Inc., a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and president of the National Smart Set Memphis Chapter.

Mother Atkins is survived by sister, Ruth Mason Lewis; brother-in-law, Robert S. Lewis, Jr., sister-in law, Mary Atkins Bruce; a stepmother, Elsie W. Mason, four nephews, Bishop J.O. Patterson, Jr., Fredrick Byas; Robert S. Lewis, III and Bryon Mason. She also leaves to cherish her loving memory six nieces, a Goddaughter and many other relatives. ☪



(r) Dr. J.O. Patterson, III and (l) Aaron Patterson honor Mother Atkins

Bishop Walter Bogan, Sr., Succumbs



Bishop G.E. Patterson stand behind the pulpit. Pictured L to R, General Board Bishops, P.A. Brooks, Roy .L.H. Winbush, Charles E. Blake, J. Neaul Haynes, Jerry Macklin and Nathaniel Wells.

By David Hall

Detroit, Michigan- Presiding Bishop Gilbert E. Patterson led the General Board, Board of Bishops and hundreds of saints from around the country in a celebration honoring the life of Bishop Walter E. Bogan, Sr. More than 2,000 people packed Miller Memorial Church Of God In Christ , Tuesday, January 17, 2006 to pay tribute to the man whose ministerial contributions made life better in the communities he reached. The family and jurisdictional family conducted a memorial service Monday evening. It was a time for friends to speak of the man. That Monday night service was good for healing and set the stage for the official General Church rites.



Bishop Walter Bogan, Sr., Succumbs

As Senior Pastor of the Harris Memorial Church Of God In Christ, Bishop Bogan served God and his community. His record of stellar accomplishments was broad and strong, much like the character and image of the man. His energetic preaching moved the conditions of darkness and ignorance from those he encountered. Bishop Bogan was concerned about being a servant in Burton and Flint, Michigan. He often said, "Greatness is not wrapped in a title, but in a towel."

A son of the Church Of God In Christ, Bishop Bogan began preaching at an early age. He was dynamic and powerful in everything he did, and in 1970, he became an ordained elder. He served the Church at every level. He was eager to serve locally,

jurisdictionally and nationally whenever possible. Bishop was appointed pastor of New Harris Temple in 1980. The church was founded by his grandfather, Elder Theodore Harris, and Bishop Bogan was instrumental in building a new edifice a few years later. He and his wife, Dianne proved to be a classic pastor and first lady couple. Missionary Dianne Bogan comes from royal stock, as her father was Bishop J. Johnson an early pioneer in Michigan. Together, Bishop and first lady Bogan raised their children, Walter Emile Bogan, II and Elder Eric C. Bogan in the Church.

The couple led the New Harris faithful in building a \$3 million state of the art sanctuary. The building bears the name of Bishop Bogan's grandfather, Superintendent Theodore and Mother Harris. The new building reflects the power, commitment and standards of its late pastor.

The General Board and dozens of the organization's highest profiled individuals attended the services. They came because Bishop Bogan lived and genuinely touched their lives. The accolades were beautiful to hear and the out pouring of emotions filled the building. This was unexpected and shocking but God's will had been done. The Presiding Bishop preached a comforting word, and the Lord illuminated the place with His presence.

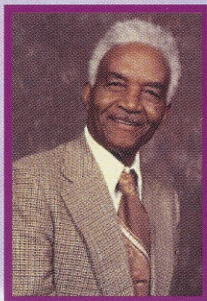
The Great Lakes First Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction is in the hands of

the Presiding Bishop and General Board. Bishop Patterson appointed Elder Eric C. Bogan as pastor of Harris Memorial. Elder Eric Bogan is married, youthful, strong, intelligent and well prepared for the task. He will have a fine mother in Missionary Dianne Bogan to help him prayerfully walk in the shoes of his father.

In August, 2000, Bishop Bogan was installed as Jurisdictional Bishop of Great Lakes First Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction of Michigan. Michigan is Church Of God In Christ country and Great Lakes First Jurisdiction will successfully carry on. Bishop Bogan conducted a great run for the General Board in 2004, but was denied a spot by only a few votes.

The passing of Bishop Walter Bogan was so sudden. After preaching on Sunday, January 8th, he slipped away. He encouraged his saints to "Stay on the Ship" and his last message was powerful. Bishop Bogan was 57 years of age, God took from us a warrior and statesmen for righteousness. The acts and wisdom of God must be humbly accepted and recognized as His perfect will. Still, Bishop Walter Bogan will be missed. ☪

Homegoing Celebration



of
Elder Claude Farlow
Pastor Emeritus,
Brown Street COGIC

Please don't sing sad songs for me,
Forget your grief and fear,
For I am in a perfect place
Away from pain and tears...

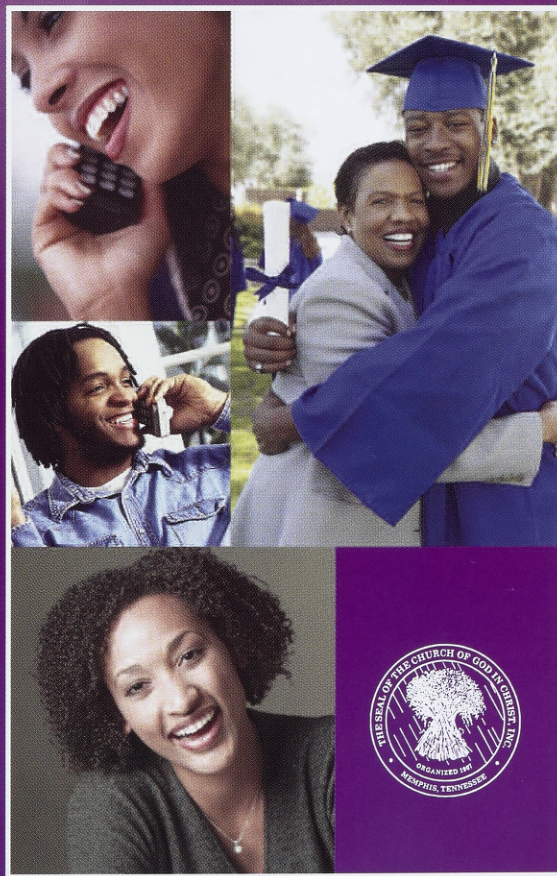
It's far away from hunger
And hurt and want and pride,
I have a place in Heaven
With the Master at my side.

My life on earth was very good,
As earthly life can go,
But Paradise is so much more
Than anyone can know...

My heart is filled with happiness
And sweet rejoicing, too.
To walk with God is perfect peace,
A joy forever new.



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Katrina/ Rita Relief Stellar in Texas

A Refuge in the Time of Storm

By Missionary Claudette Hunt



Houston, Texas- In the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the jurisdiction in Texas opened their hearts and doors to evacuees from Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Texas. Bishop C.L. Bryant, Texas Southeast Third Jurisdiction, Bishop N.H. Henderson, Texas South Central Jurisdiction, Bishop Rufus Kyles Texas First Jurisdiction and Bishop S.E. Iglehart, Texas Southwest Jurisdiction banded together and lived the faith and words of Jesus to the fullest: "For I was hungry... and

you clothed me" St. Matthew

25:35-36. In response to the devastation and disruption that hurricanes Katrina and Rita caused in the lives of thousands of people, these four bishops coordinated the opening of a 20,000 square foot relief center, in Houston, Texas

When the word went out the saints from around the country stepped up! In particular, General Board Member, Bishop J.W. Macklin of Hayward, California and the bishops of Northern California sent five 18 wheeler truck loads of goods and supplies to help stock the center. They pledged and did send many more trucks on an as needed basis. The interdenominational flare flavor was added to the venture and sweetened the situation. Jackie Owens, United Holiness Ministries of Akron, Ohio and Linda Walker, seventh Day Adventist Services also supplied the center with clothes, bedding and food. The center provided basic necessities for men, women and children. These supplies included kitchenware, groceries, bedding, school supplies,

toiletries, medical supplies, clothes and much more.

Titular heads are normally out in front of the laity. In Houston, the contribution of lay persons was equally outstanding! While supplies were being shipped to Houston, Evangelist Debra Hubbard and over 70 volunteers worked untiringly to prepare the center for opening. Evangelist

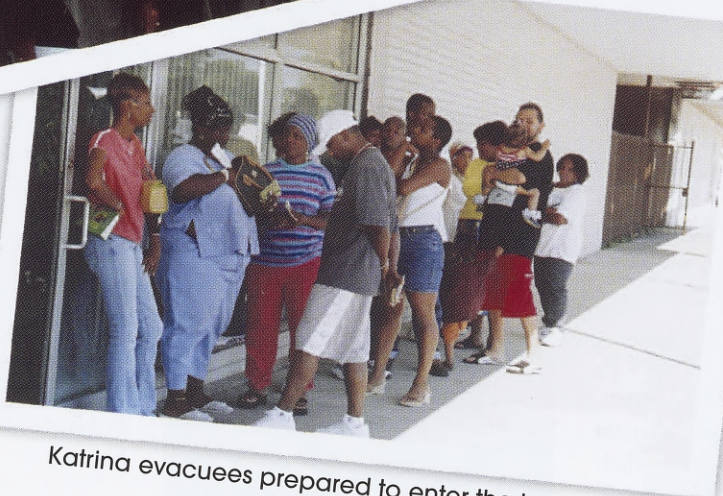
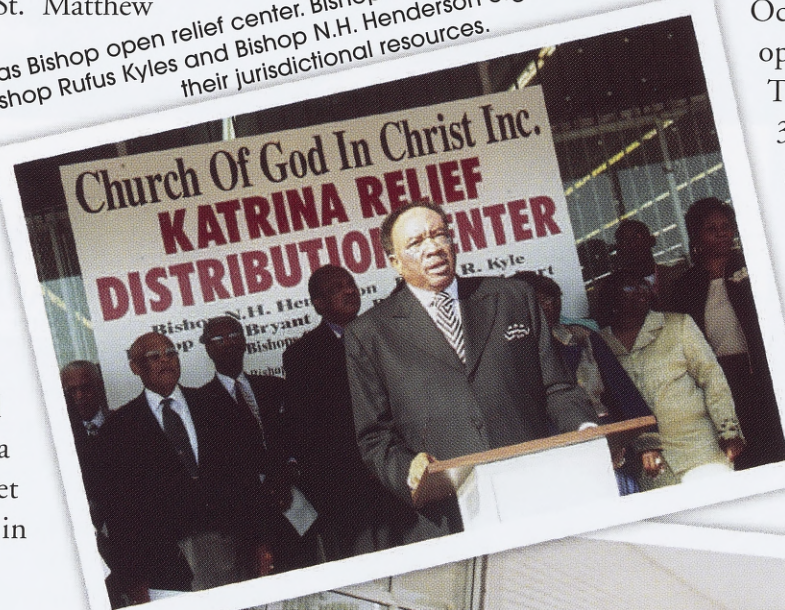
Hubbard was named superintendent of the center. The center, located at 9929 Homestead Road in Houston open October 19, 2005. The center opened for service, Tuesday-Thursday from 10:00 AM to 3:00PM. Dr. P.E. Bryant, administrative Assistant to Bishop Henderson and project chairman, said, "The center will remain open through January 2006 or as long as the need warrants us being open and the supplies last."

In the first three week period the Center served over 1,850 persons. It is projected that the number of persons needing assistance will remain high. The United Way and the Red Cross closed their relief distribution center. Dr. Bryant said, "We are committed to assisting all displaced citizens of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Texas. The bishops know the second stage of support and resettlement will bring about a difficult

set of priorities."

The Church Of God In Christ is working with government and emergency institutions to further the denomination's involvement. The Church Of God In Christ has been there as a first and continuous responder. ☉

Texas Bishop open relief center. Bishop C.L. Bryant addresses press. Bishop Rufus Kyles and Bishop N.H. Henderson organized shared their jurisdictional resources.



Katrina evacuees prepared to enter the building

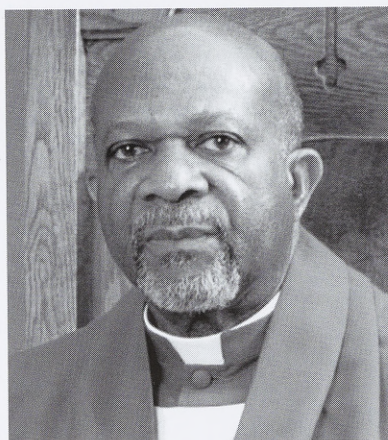


By Cynthia Newman

San Diego, CA- Hurricane Katrina destroyed the homes and lives of many individual in coastal America. The destruction cause property loss in the billions and thousands of homeless people. The graphic and difficult view of people narrowly surviving the storm and its aftermath are indelibly branded upon our minds. The tears and desperation of victims as depicted on television touch the hearts of millions of Americans.

In San Diego, California there were two women who were so disturbed by the suffering of people they became angels of mercy. They did not let anything discourage them, rather than stay in the comfort of their homes, they headed for the storm.

A couple days after Labor Day the two women, Thelma Hill and Joyce Brown got together with other volunteers and began tirelessly working to aid victims of Hurricane Katrina. They called their effort, "Operation Humanity." They got started at the St Stephen's Church Of God In Christ, located at 5825 Imperial Avenue. Bishop George Dallas McKinney, General Board member and pastor encourage their efforts. The angels spent day after day praying, counseling, giving clothes away, handing out toiletries, and packing boxes to be sent to Louisiana and Mississippi.



Bishop George Dallas McKinney

The saints were amazed at the level of caring and compassion demonstrated. The Bishop saw the effort going on as his opportunity to provide must needed trucks for transporting items to the stricken area. Bishop provided a truck and many other influential persons did likewise. Then drivers stepped forward to drive and transport the goods in the needed area. It became a modern day miracle!

The two angels were joined by others. People came forth and brought lunch for the volunteers. Sister Jackie Willis, Mother Agnes Brooks, Mother Mattie McAfee, Deacon Curtis and Mother Maggie Reeves, Mother Alreather Calhoun, and Sister Jimmy Pace provide lunch for the volunteers. The band of angels kept on growing!

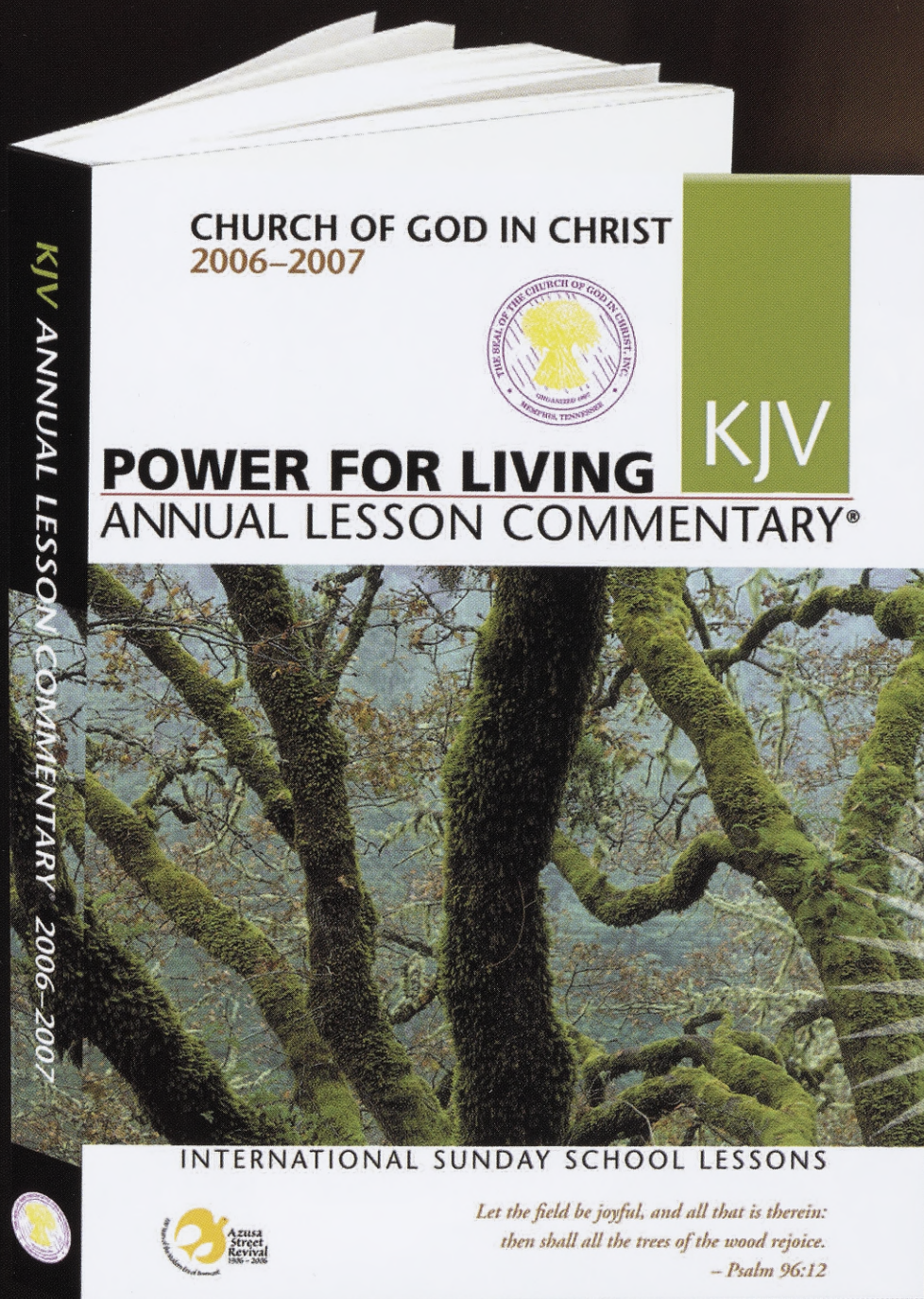
Soon Operation Humanity took on a miracle status and elderly people like ninety three year old man name Abe and his wife bought tape and supplies, then wrapped boxes. The children from a near by community school pitched in. A couple who recently had a baby shower donated the clothes for their new baby and shipped them to Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The House of Metamorphous sent volunteers to load the trucks. Program Crash sent volunteers. Sister Brown and Sister Hill watched with joyful hearts as thing continued to grow. People who worked regular jobs came after work. Sister Dell Moore and Sister Mela Pettis packed boxes of clothes until the wee hours.

Bishop Mckinney provided spiritual help with prayer and comforting words to encourage the volunteers to continue working. All and all the effort prove tremendous!

The Lord has angels that appear during the storms of life. The world may seen hopeless but God has a blessed people who know and believe the mercy and compassion of God must be shared among humanity. The example of these angel is a signal that God yet has a chosen people. His angels are ever present. You may be one too! ☺

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then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice.
— Psalm 96:12*



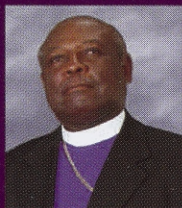
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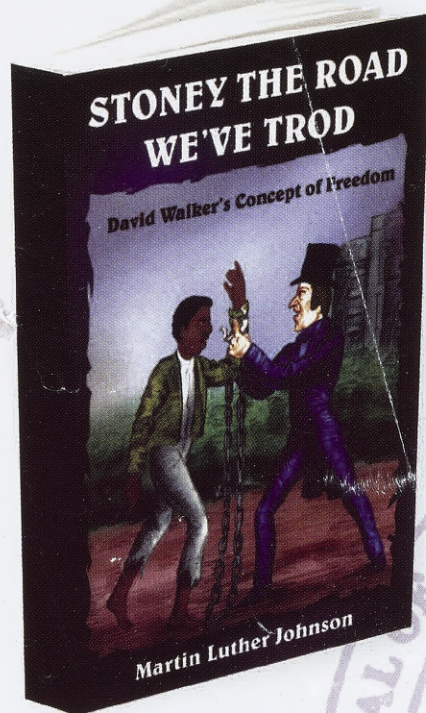
Church Of God In Christ, A Look Back





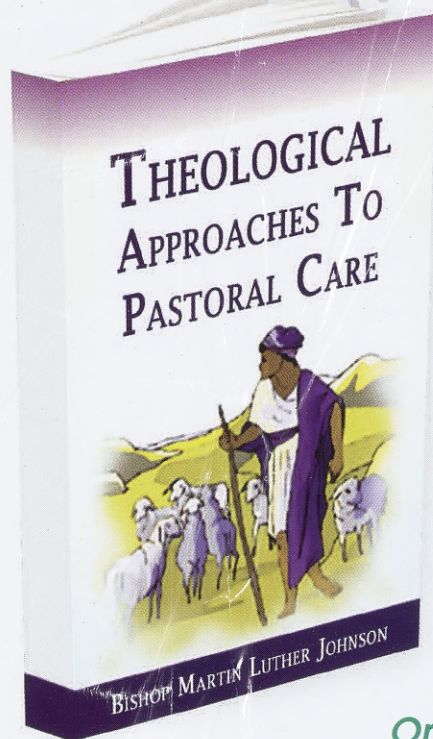
Two Powerful Books On Sale Now!

By Bishop Martin Luther Johnson



Stoney The Road We've Trod

Convinced that the final chapter about the life of David Walker had not been written, Dr. Johnson presents a constructive and provocative approach to the life and struggles of this man. His approach gets to the core of American racism and presents a challenge to future generations to pursue clarifications of, and answers to, the inconsistency between enslavement by white Americans and Christianity's message of Jesus Christ. Deeply rooted in this book is the urging to re-read Black history specifically, and American history in general, in an effort to arrive at a point of creative and positive dialogue. Because theological themes of racism, liberation, and social justice are pervading focusses of the work, one must get in touch with the Jesus of History in order to get a better grasp of the Christ of Faith. One must come to grips with who Jesus is and experience a deeper undergirding of the reality of Him in order to understand the meaning and purpose of total and complete liberation. Jesus Christ is tantamount to liberation and reconciliation of persons, but total reconciliation is predicated upon repentance of the persons, systems, and institutions responsible for the original alienation.



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Martin Luther Johnson is the Jurisdictional Prelate of the First Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, Church of God In Christ, New Jersey, and a retired Colonel from the United States Army. He is a graduate of Palm Beach Atlantic University; The Interdenominational Theological Center; The University of Central Texas; New York University, where he completed the course work for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Religious Education (ABD); the United States Basic Course and the Advanced Course; the Command and General College; and The International Seminary (Ph.D.).

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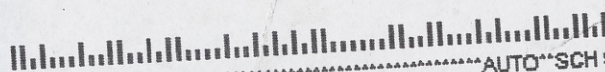
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